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Socialist Democracy

Aspects of Theory



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M O S C O W

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СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ДЕМОКРАТИЯ

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INTRODUCTION

Born in the agoras of ancient Greece, the word "democracy" has since passed into the languages of all nations. Questions concerning it have invariably stood at the centre of the struggle between classes and parties. In each successive age they assumed a different form, becoming more acute, and today they are the object of especially fierce political battles and ideological polemics thus acquiring special relevance and urgency.

If this is the case with questions of democracy in general, it applies in particular to questions of socialist democracy. To begin with they directly affect over a thousand million people in the countries of the world socialist system. Then they are also assuming more and more importance for the peoples of a number of countries, which, after throwing off the imperialist yoke declared socialism the aim of their development and embarked on more or less intensive social transformations. Last but not least, what is involved is no more no less than the future political organisation of the whole of mankind.

"A socialist state draws its strength," said L. I. Brezhnev, addressing a session of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow in 1969, "from its inseparable bond with the people and the participation of the broadest masses in the administration of the country and of public affairs. This is exactly what socialist democracy is called upon to ensure. Its improvement and extension constitute the main trend in the political development of Soviet society on the road to communism."¹ This course, defined in the CPSU Programme, was confirmed even more forcefully at the 24th Party Congress.

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Moscow, 1971, p. 196.

Questions of socialist democracy are as complicated a subject to study as they are of vital relevance today. The fact alone that the principles of the new society are being applied among nations whose socio-economic conditions and historical traditions vary vastly gives rise not only to a multiplicity of practical forms and methods but to a large number of different theories and ideas. Especially since the subject itself is in constant flux, change and development, and the rates of this development are such that often no sooner have scientific evaluations appeared than they need altering and modifying to suit a new set of circumstances.

Socialist democracy does not and cannot spring forth full-grown like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. It goes through many stages of development and improvement, gradually maturing as the tasks of socialist and communist construction are solved and the grim legacy of the old system based on exploitation is gradually overcome in social relations and in people's consciousness. This being so, socialist democracy must be examined: (1) *as a dynamic process* of consolidation and development of the forms of administration and organisation of society most appropriate to socialism, rather than as a collection of political institutions and functions established once and for all, and (2) *as a diverse process*, taking into account the various conceptions and experience of socialist countries and comparing and evaluating them on the basis of Marxist-Leninist theory.

This approach enables one to fully appreciate the remarkable achievements of socialism, which has attained for the first time in history genuine people's rule, personal freedom and equality of individuals and nations. It also enables one to clearly perceive the paths of further advance towards the goals defined in the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, the programme documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other fraternal parties, and the entire world communist movement.

On this basis the author has attempted to analyse some of the key problems of development of socialist democracy. First, he is primarily concerned with the *principles and forms of Party leadership of socialist society*.

The leading role of the vanguard of the working class and all the working people has always been a fundamental principle of the socialist state system and the whole political system of socialism, a condition for successful communist construction. As society advances along the road to communism, this role constantly grows, for only the Party, armed with Marxist-Leninist theory and uniting around

itself all the labouring classes and strata of the population, is capable of providing the right answers for the complicated problems of social life, consistently defining the current tasks and organising the working people to carry them out. The increasing role of the Communist Party requires that the forms, methods and style of Party leadership be constantly improved, and this is what largely determines the level of development of socialist democracy as a whole.

It is because the principle of Party leadership is of such vital importance for the building of socialism and communism that it becomes the object of such fierce attacks from imperialist propaganda and various kinds of reformist currents. Both "Left"- and Right-wing opportunists have done serious damage to the cause of socialist construction in some countries of the world socialist system in the last few years by their gross distortions of the principle. A look at Lenin's ideas on the leading role of the Marxist party and analysis of their creative implementation in accordance with the requirements of developing socialist society thus assumes even greater importance, both for practical purposes and for the purpose of exposing various opportunist conceptions and refuting imperialist propaganda.

In the Report of the Central Committee to the 24th CPSU Congress, L. I. Brezhnev said: "Much attention was given to the further development of the teaching on the leading role of the Communist Party. Everybody knows that this is one of the fundamental questions of the revolutionary movement and the building of the new society. Today it has become the pivot of the struggle between Marxist-Leninists and representatives of various forms of revisionism. The principled stand of the CPSU and its relentless struggle for the purity of the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the Party was of international significance, helping, as is emphasised by the fraternal Parties, the Communists and millions of working people to maintain a correct orientation."¹

Another group of questions examined concern the *participation of the working people in the running of socialist society*.

Socialism is the legitimate heir to the entire wealth of democratic forms and traditions developed by progressive socio-political thought and won and defended by the popular masses throughout their secular struggle against exploiters. At the same time, the nature of the new social system permits considerable expansion of the arsenal of democratic methods, and engenders completely new, hitherto unknown

¹ 24th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1971, p. 122.

forms of rule by the people, both direct and representative. Hence the need for a correct evaluation and optimal combination of these forms, their most effective application both from the point of view of the tasks of development of socialist democracy itself and in the interests of rational organisation and management of the national economy.

It is no secret that this problem has been somewhat complicated by a tendency to be rather overeager and introduce elements of public self-administration where the necessary premises have not yet matured. A tendency to underestimate representational democracy has arisen as a result of unjustified attempts to equate communist self-administration with direct democracy.

On the other hand, the irruption of the scientific and technological revolution into the sphere of administration and management and the growing need for specialisation this involves has called forth the theory of a universal spread of technocracy irrespective of the type of political regime, the rapid approach of an age of rule by specialist administrators, an "intellectual élite", etc. Many writers and scholars, including some sympathetic to socialism, have begun to sound the alarm. Is it not perhaps necessary, they suggest anxiously, to choose between competence (i.e. efficiency) and the involvement of broad sections of the working masses? And does not technological progress perhaps undermine the very idea of socialist democracy?

There is surely no need to stress how essential it is to investigate all these problems from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint and produce a well-substantiated refutation of the ideas about technocracy representing a threat to socialism. Even more important is forming a clear idea of ways of finding an optimal combination of the most effective modern methods of organisation and control with public control and supervision of the activity of government, administrative and management bodies, with the most rational forms of participation by the masses in these processes.

Another subject considered is *individual freedom*. Its importance today is determined by the same two factors. There is surely no other subject that is used more extensively or insistently by imperialist propaganda in the struggle against socialism. Forced to recognise the tremendous economic and social progress the socialist system has achieved and the remarkable accomplishments in developing national culture, science and technology, the anti-communists nonetheless assert that all this is achieved at the price of suppression of individual

freedom. One of the major duties of Soviet social science is to energetically refute such fabrications of anti-communist propaganda and demonstrate the tremendous progress achieved by the socialist system in ensuring conditions for all-round individual development.

However, the question of individual freedom is very important today not only from the point of view of the ideological struggle: it also happens to be one of the most complex problems of communist construction, of great practical as well as theoretical interest. The establishment of a satisfactory relationship between the individual and society, ensuring material conditions and legal guarantees for enjoyment of constitutional rights and freedoms, the degree to which these can be restricted in the public interest, the criteria that apply in the case of conflict between the individual and society, all these and many more similar questions of socialist practice give rise to lively polemics in the international communist movement.

Finally, it should be added that considerable space in the present work has been devoted to analysis of certain questions concerning the socio-political system of contemporary capitalism. This is generally due to the need to trace the origins of a particular feature or present a clearer picture of the metamorphosis it has undergone. In a few cases it is simply a matter of "borderline" questions, that can only be examined through comparison of socialism with capitalism.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

The first elements of what is now known as democracy began to make their appearance at the very dawn of the history of human society. If primitive man did not worry his head unduly over such questions as how free he was and how equal in his rights with other members of the community, it was for the simple reason that he did not suffer oppression and inequality. Clan or tribal society produced both the direct form of democracy (the general assembly of all members of the clan or tribe) and the representative form (the council of elders and chiefs, a kind of primitive parliament). In studying the customs of ancient peoples we can discover many other democratic institutions in embryo form.

Democracy will permeate all the social relations of developed communism. Communist public self-administration, as far as we can visualise it today, will in fact be democratic principles of economic organisation and distribution of material and spiritual values, upholding of public order and relations between the individual and the collective and the individual and society carried to their utmost imaginable limit.

But although democratic institutions arose in pre-class society and are expected to be preserved in classless society, *democracy as a political concept is a form of the state*¹ and hence pertains exclusively to class society.

¹ Used here in the broad sense of *political regime*, characterised both by methods of activity of the machinery of state, and its form of organisation (form of government, form of state system, etc.).

Thus the character of democracy is determined by the very same socio-economic conditions that determine this or that type of state. The democracy of antiquity might be relatively developed, as in Athens at the time of Pericles, or spurious as in the latter years of the Roman Republic, but in whatever circumstances it always remained the preserve of the slave-holding class. Medieval democracy flourished in the city-republics and dragged out a wretched existence in the parliamentary monarchies, but in all circumstances remained a class prerogative and did not extend to the lower levels of society, the peasantry and the urban poor. In the age of capitalism democracy may be stable or precarious, but it is still bourgeois democracy nevertheless.

In order to understand the character of democracy it is sufficient to determine the historical type of the state in question. Far more difficult to answer is the question of why democracy became the state form in a particular country at a particular period. This requires a rather shrewd analysis of concrete historical conditions, the degree of stratification of the ruling class itself, and the balance of forces between the various social groups. Unsurpassed examples of this kind of analysis, showing how certain forms of state (in this case bourgeois democracy and Bonapartism) result from class and intra-class conflict are to be found in Karl Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

It is worth noting that *an exploiter state is capable of carrying out its functions in a democratic or anti-democratic form, or in forms intermediate between these two extremes.*

The fundamental difference between the socialist state and various kinds of exploiter state is that *socialist democracy is the only form appropriate to the socialist state.*

All revolutions represent a supreme form of democracy, a practical as opposed to a purely verbal referendum. But only socialist revolution involves in aware historical creativity not separate social strata or classes, but the broadest working and exploited masses. As well as opening up a vast field of action for the politically active part of the people it also arouses the general masses from their age-long apathy, giving people who have been crushed and dulled by their oppressed state the opportunity to participate in the discussion and solution of the public affairs, increasing their human dignity.

The chronicle of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia provides a stirring picture of political awakening. Yesterday's *muzhik*,

put in uniform and meekly prepared to lay down his life "for tsar and country", after a few months in the seething army mass began to understand something of the alignment of class forces and take an interest not only in the affairs of his own village, but in the affairs of the whole country. It was not simply the words of the Bolshevik agitator that opened his eyes: certainly a no less important role was played by a new awareness of his own responsibility for what course events were going to take. In the place of blind, unquestioning obedience to the orders of his superiors he was offered a chance to vote for this or that decision at regimental meetings. The speakers who addressed the meetings, representing different warring political parties, solicited his vote. At first, perhaps, he remained silent, preferring to listen to what the "people who know" had to say, pondering and weighing it all up. Gradually he grew interested in what the newspaper or propaganda leaflet had to say. He grew bolder, requested permission to speak, asked a question, made a suggestion, and undertook to put a decision into practice. Thus, step by step, the "Man with the Gun" went through the revolutionary school of democracy. And a stage was reached where no power on earth could make him return to his former state and deprive him of the right to participate in political life, the right to make decisions.

Socialism does not arise spontaneously as some blind elemental force but as a result of the purposeful activity of the working people led by their Communist Party. This reflects Lenin's well-known formula of the primacy of politics over economics. Revolutionary democracy produced a new system of economic relations,¹ which became the material base for the consolidation and development of the new, socialist democracy.

The economic base of socialism is public ownership of the means of production, which practically excludes the possibility of human exploitation. In whatever economic field people work, whatever the nature of their activity, they are working not for capitalists but for themselves and the whole of society. The emancipation of labour from exploitation resting on private ownership is a basic condition for individual freedom.

Public ownership of the means of production makes personal labour the only source of livelihood. The need for every one to work

¹ This is not to be taken as subscription to the voluntarist theory that all tasks can be solved given the desire and necessary enthusiasm. Here it is a question of transformations prepared by the entire course of development of capitalism and the revolutionary workers' movement.

and hence the right to remuneration according to one's work is a basic condition for equality.

Public ownership means public management of property. The state, effecting planned management of the socialist economy, accounting and control of the measure of labour and consumption, is acting on behalf of and with the mandate of the collective owner of the means of production, the entire people. The public system of organisation and management of the national economy is a major condition for people's rule, for democracy.

The socialist economic system not only produces the conditions for all the chief components of democracy—people's rule, equality and individual freedom: it makes democratisation of all aspects of social life imperative, this being one of the most important conditions for its progressive development. Indeed, even a correct formulation of socio-economic tasks, let alone a scientifically substantiated approach to their solution, is best achieved by employing consistently democratic methods. The collective experience of the Marxist-Leninist party and the people is the best safeguard against mistakes that could be detrimental to socialist and communist construction.

If strict adherence to democratic principles is an important instrument for reaching correct decisions, it is even more important for their practical implementation. In the author's view two points in particular should be borne in mind here. First, even the most eminently correct decision arrived at and accepted by an undemocratic method suffers from a certain defect, since it is perceived as a command. Indeed the importance of democratic procedure lies in the fact that it permits all the advantages of the proposed solution to be made clear, so that the need for it can be fully understood. It is what transforms a decision from a command to a personal conviction of each executor, and makes him co-author of the idea, aware of his personal responsibility for the way it is put into practice.

Second, in socialist society the possibility of solving a given economic task directly depends on the initiative of the worker collective and their leaders (managers). Yet initiative is determined not only by creative drive and moral motives but also by the scope there is for activity. Unwarranted restriction of powers and petty regulation of each and every economic action are harmful in any circumstances, but especially during transition to a higher stage of economic development. Practice has shown that such a transition is quite impossible without the creation of the appropriate democratic condi-

tions, extension of the powers and scope for initiative of the working collectives.

Thus, under socialism success in the economic field (and in other spheres of social activity) is directly related to the development of democracy.

Socialist democracy is not born full-grown and perfect but must go through various stages of improvement.

It is worth recalling here that bourgeois democracy is the product of centuries of development. In England, for instance, the first elements of civil rights contained in the Magna Carta were won from the crown as early as the 13th century, after which a fierce popular struggle, sometimes erupting in revolutionary outbursts was necessary every step of the way to universal suffrage, the modern parliamentary system, etc. If history granted such a generous time allowance for the development of bourgeois democracy, it would be highly unfair, to say the least, to expect socialist democracy—a phenomenon of an incomparably higher order—to reach perfection immediately after its appearance.

Socialism can afford to waste no time creating its own democratic system corresponding to the new economic conditions and accelerating the growth of new social relations. But it cannot solve the task all at once, since the formation and development of socialist democracy is not a question of will alone but is an objective process, determined by the aggregate of internal and external conditions.

Being a dictatorship with respect to the defeated exploiter classes, the Soviet socialist state was conceived and from the very moment of its appearance was built as a democratic organisation of the working people, who through the Soviets and other mass institutions had acquired a genuine opportunity to participate in the administration of public affairs. In his "Plan for an Article 'On the Question of the Role of the State'" (December 1916) Lenin mentioned "introduction and defence of democracy" as being among the basic tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹

In order to appreciate the organic link between proletarian dictatorship and democracy it is most important to elucidate the main aims of the former. Apart from crushing the resistance of the exploiter classes, they include government and state guidance of society by the working class and the building of socialism. These positive aims determine the practical tasks and functions of the socialist state from

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 381.

the very first stages of its development. Moreover, the task of crushing the exploiters, important though it is (at certain times where the class struggle reaches maximum intensity the very fate of the socialist state depends on effective action in that direction), is only of a temporary nature, as compared with the major long-term tasks of the new government.

Neither suppression of the enemies of socialism, nor—and indeed especially—the more creative tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be accomplished otherwise than through organised efforts of the entire working class and peasantry, i.e., through unfolding democratic action.

But if the dictatorship of the proletariat could not take any other form than proletarian democracy, this democracy was inevitably circumscribed by the sharp class conflict at home and in the international arena, and by the need to crush the counter-revolution and defend the socialist state from armed intervention and other hostile acts by imperialism. Lenin castigated Kautsky and other renegades from Marxism for their attempts to substitute so-called “pure democracy” for dictatorship of the proletariat. To try to put this slogan into practice in conditions of a fierce class battle would have simply meant betraying the cause of the socialist revolution.

The most commonly cited example of the limited democracy of the first stage of development of the Soviet socialist state is the unequal franchise. In actual fact, however, depriving the expropriated bourgeois, landowners and other exploiter elements of the right to vote simply reflected the fact that proletarian democracy did not extend to them anyway. Moreover, the advantages guaranteed for the industrial proletariat testified to unavoidable restriction of democratic principles with respect to certain strata of the working population. The Communist Party and the working class naturally could not afford to leave anything to chance and run the risk of representatives of the unstable, vacillating petty-bourgeois masses predominating in government bodies.

This limiting of democracy was due primarily to internal conditions, to the fact that the revolution had triumphed in a country with a predominantly petty-bourgeois population. But there were also external causes: first armed intervention and later the persisting danger of further military invasion.

A situation of grim class struggle inevitably leaves its mark on all aspects of the political organisation of society. Thus, the need to deprive the exploiters of such a powerful weapon as freedom of the

press, which could be very dangerous in the wrong hands, necessitated the introduction of strict censorship. Yet this also tended to restrict a healthy criticism of shortcomings and defects. At first the negative effects of this absolutely essential measure were slight, primarily due to Lenin's merciless criticism of even the smallest manifestations of bureaucracy which gave a militant critical tone to the press as a whole.

In the thirties, however, the negative influence of these measures made itself increasingly felt and the detrimental effect on Soviet society was considerable.

Clearly, the measure of restrictions on democracy necessary and the inevitable cost involved is determined first and foremost by the specifics of the country, and by circumstances of time and place. Lenin repeatedly stressed that it would be wrong to raise this aspect of Soviet experience to the quality of an absolute and declare it an essential feature of the establishment of the socialist state. Subsequent events have proved the correctness of this view. A number of socialist countries have managed to dispense entirely or almost entirely with restricting the franchise.

Naturally, objective conditions are not everything here. A great deal depends on subjective factors, on the ability to correctly evaluate the situation and find the most appropriate solution in the prevailing circumstances. The difficulty of reaching the solution is vastly increased by its possible consequences. To fail to take the measures necessary to defend the new order could prove fatal, while to go too far and permit excessive restrictions on democracy unwarranted by the circumstances is to greatly complicate leadership of the masses and make the path to socialism far more difficult.

That is why whatever the original state of socialist democracy and whatever the restrictions dictated at the initial stage of its establishment, its constant deepening and improvement is an objective trend.

The development of socialist democracy is an uninterrupted process determined by the need to mobilise forces for the tasks of social development and by the material conditions that result from the solution of these tasks. However, there is a basic landmark in this process determining the qualitative leap from proletarian democracy to democracy of the entire people. Its preconditions are the elimination of exploiting classes, the building of socialism, and the formation of the socio-political and ideological unity of the whole people.

Indeed it is in the opposite tendencies of change in the social base

of the state that the fundamental difference between socialism and capitalism is most patently manifested.

Having acquired the widest possible social base through bourgeois revolution, the capitalist state later loses it bit by bit. However skilfully the ruling circles act and whatever clever devices they employ, they can only count on temporary successes. The general tendency towards contraction of the social base of the bourgeois state continues relentlessly. This is especially felt today, when a small group of monopolists and adjunctive strata of the big bourgeoisie concentrate in their hands all the power, stand in opposition to the vast majority of society and make state policy serve their own selfish interests.

The development of the socialist state presents quite a different picture. Its base is constantly expanding. Naturally, this does not take place automatically, but as a result of consistent efforts to enlist the support of the broad masses for the task of revolutionary transformation and building a new life. And since the road of socialist construction is paved with difficulties it is essential to have a well-planned economic and social policy excluding even the temporary disaffection of this or that working strata with socialist ideals and guaranteeing the constant strengthening of their faith in the socialist state and its home and foreign policy.

The basic trend in the development of the social base of the proletarian state is its expansion up to the point where it merges with the whole of society. The proletariat organised in a state and the people organised in a state are two stages in a regular progress through the socialist state system to communist public self-administration.

The regular development of the content of the socialist state is attended by the development of its form, the development of democratic institutions.

It would be a big mistake, however, to think that as soon as socialism has been built extensive socialist democracy appears in its final form. Primarily because such a final form is altogether impossible since democracy as a form of state is a transient phenomenon which will eventually become communist social self-administration. Lenin noted that "pure" (i.e. absolute) democracy is impossible, "since in communist society democracy will *wither away* in the process of changing and becoming a habit, but will never be 'pure' democracy."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 242.

Moreover, quite some time is needed for political forms and institutions to be brought into accordance with the content of state power. The task is complicated by the fact that it is not simply a question of introducing, stage by stage, certain already known and well-tried forms and institutions: a great deal has still to be found and tested by a process of trial and error.

It should also be borne in mind that the development of this sort does not proceed smoothly, without a struggle between different points of view and ideas as to the most suitable and socially useful rates and methods of improving various democratic institutions. Every step in this direction must be comprehensively substantiated from the standpoint of Marxist-Leninist theory, and is the result of broad debate and discussion by the working people, the object of special examination by the higher government bodies.

Socialist democracy is not a pattern imposed on life but the very history and political expression of the struggle between classes and social strata through which society passes on the way to its communist future.

In society no phenomena exist in their "pure" form. If socialism were being raised on one of the islands of the wondrous continent of Utopia everything might be built strictly according to the prescriptions of a preconceived pattern. But it is growing out of the old society and in a far from idyllic situation. No sooner was it born than it had to break free of the vicious stranglehold of intervention, blockade, hunger and war. Moreover, it did not have the good fortune to be born into a "good family", and grew up without chamber-maids and governesses: it had to simultaneously build its own new house for itself, work until it was ready to drop and tackle the heights of science self-taught. Most important, if it was to grow up at all, it had to overcome the onerous legacy from the past—social inequality, national enmity, greed, avarice, ambition, thirst for power and a host of other imperfections cultivated by centuries of social injustice. It is surely hardly surprising then that the new system did not immediately correspond to the professed social ideal.

Thus, in analysing socialist reality in general and socialist democracy in particular the most important thing is to distinguish clearly between what is inherent in the nature of the new order and what is the product of circumstances and hampers its growth, but is ultimately transient and superable. Such an approach is essential if we are to recognise properly the particular problems that socialism faces and confidently forecast its prospects.

CHAPTER 2

THE ONE-PARTY AND MULTI-PARTY SYSTEMS

In a society where the interests of classes and social groups are reflected in the ideology and activity of political parties, the measure of democracy depends directly on relations between them and the state. There is no doubt that the substance of state power (and hence the type of democracy) is determined by the economic system, and above all by property relations. But it is equally undeniable that various forms and degrees of democracy are possible within the framework of this substance. In other words, it is a question of how the ruling class (or classes) organise their government, to what extent they are interested in and encourage the development of democratic institutions or, at worst, are forced to tolerate them.

In the USSR, as in other countries of the world socialist system, the development of society is guided by the Communist Party. This function was officially established in the 1936 Constitution which states: "The most active and aware citizens from the ranks of the working class, labouring peasantry and working intelligentsia voluntarily unite in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which is the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to build communist society and represents the leading nucleus of all the organisations of the working people, both public and state."

The question of relations between Party and state under socialism is a favourite theme of bourgeois theoreticians in the ideological struggle, and gives rise to endless speculation.

The most ardent critics of socialism accuse it of establishing the principle of party leadership of the state. This for them is quite sufficient evidence of the purely formal nature of socialist de-

mocracy. How, they argue, can there be any question of democracy where a powerful political organisation, with more or less permanent cadres united by common ideological views, stands at the helm of state?

Such "exposes" are not worth the paper they are written on, because for a start Communists have never made any secret of their attitude to this question. Throughout Marxist literature it is stressed perfectly clearly that *leadership by the Marxist-Leninist party of the working class is a fundamental principle of socialist revolution*. Without this leadership neither the triumph of the October Revolution and the building of socialism in the USSR nor successful socialist construction in a number of other countries would have been possible.

The truth of the matter is that as long as the state exists it is led by parties expressing the interests of the ruling classes. In bourgeois society, this means parties protecting the interests of private ownership and the system it rests on. In socialist society it means parties that defend public ownership and the appropriate system. Leadership by the Communist Party is an objective element, a prerequisite of advance towards communism. Communism cannot be built without Communists any more than a building can be built without architects or the space exploration carried out without cosmonauts.

The principle of party leadership was not an invention of Marx's, or indeed of anybody else. It gradually emerged out of historical practice as a natural way for the ruling class to govern. And indeed the only one, since if in present-day conditions the ruling class were to cease governing through its party it simply could not govern at all. This brings us to another thesis of bourgeois theorists which is essentially an offshoot of the preceding one.

The accusation is that Marxist theory and practice do not correspond and that in practice dictatorship of the proletariat becomes dictatorship by the Party. Here we are dealing with either genuine ignorance (of theory and practice) or deliberate hypocrisy. The rule of any class is always effected through government by a political vanguard, most fully aware and most consistent in defence of its interests. Indeed parties are created in order to help a class become more fully aware of its basic interests, to organise and raise it to struggle to achieve its aims. No class dictatorship can be organised in such a way as to permit the entire class to occupy ministerial posts and thence dictate its supreme class will. This

task is performed on its behalf and with its agreement and mandate by its political vanguard.

Just as leadership by a bourgeois party is a principle of bourgeois government, so leadership by a proletarian party is a principle of proletarian government. The essential difference between the theorists of communism and capitalism is that the former freely and frankly admit this, whereas the latter prefer to hide it, presenting the dictatorship of their class or even a minute stratum of it, the monopoly hierarchy, as a model of pure democracy.

The specious nature of such arguments on party rule and the gap between the theory and practice are so obvious that it is hardly worth dwelling on them. Another thesis of the opponents of Marxism deserves attention, however, and that is the thesis that socialism is yoked to the one-party system, and that this is incompatible with democracy since it deprives the voter of a choice, excludes competitiveness from the struggle for power and hence the ruling party's sense of responsibility towards the people. This thesis is held not only by people who are openly hostile to socialism but also by fellow-travellers and sympathisers. A strong current of political thought has appeared in the West that approves of public ownership and the socialist economic system, greatly admires the organisation of social services and the peaceful foreign policy of the socialist countries, but insists that socialism has not yet managed to create the appropriate political system to match its economic and social system, and insists that the fact that there is only one party is mainly to blame for this.

The fundamental mistake here, of course, is the failure to take into account the essential difference in the system of class relations of capitalism and socialism, the ascribing of excessive independent importance to political form at the expense of its social content.

In capitalist conditions the multi-party system is above all a reflection of class antagonism. As long as society is divided into exploiters and exploited, class conflict is inevitably expressed through struggle between their respective political parties. The fact that Communist parties exist and thrive under bourgeois democracy does not testify to the broad views of the "fathers" of bourgeois constitutions and is not a gift from the liberals to the masses: it merely reflects the objective situation, namely, that capitalism is unable to dispense with the working class, and the working class always organises a party to defend its interests. A proletarian party may be legal and able to operate openly or illegal and forced under-

ground, it may have more or less mass support and be more or less active and militant. But it is always there and when we say that it is indestructible we are simply stating a proven historical fact.

In the thirties Hitler and Mussolini tried to wipe out the Communist Party, and while they were about it the socialist parties too, imposing their own pseudo-socialist fascist organisation as a substitute. Resorting extensively to social demagogy and whipping up an atmosphere of chauvinistic hysteria, they succeeded for a time in pulling the wool over the eyes of a considerable portion of the workers. Yet neither the social demagogy of the nazis nor the persecution of the Communists achieved the desired aim of capital, the destruction of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, since in order to do so it would have been necessary to destroy the entire proletariat.

The bourgeoisie is not averse to employing methods of terror and repression in our own day. This is seen from such facts as the repeated attempts by US ruling circles to outlaw the Communist Party of the United States of America, and the fierce persecution and physical extermination of Communists in Spain and Portugal, Greece and Indonesia. A policy of anti-communism is to some extent a feature of all bourgeois states, and if in many countries the ruling circles are obliged to resign themselves to communist activity it is certainly not because they have no wish to suppress it but simply that they are powerless to do so.

At the same time, the bourgeoisie today is placing its hopes more and more in so-called "deproletarianisation of the proletariat". Bourgeois sociologists maintain that with improved working conditions and higher living standards resulting from the scientific and technological revolution the workers are gradually "dissolving" in a "middle class" which is perfectly satisfied with its present condition and has no intention of challenging the capitalist system.

In actual fact quite the opposite is happening: it is not deproletarianisation of the proletariat but proletarianisation of other classes and strata of the population that is in progress. The antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is expanding and changing into antagonism between a vast mass of wage earners and a small number of owners of the means of production. This finds support in everyday social practice. Thus, in the last few decades strikes by office staff, medical staff, university teachers, engineers and technicians, civil servants and even policemen have become a commonplace occurrence in the capitalist world. In other words,

wage earners of various social categories are standing up for their interests by resorting to the traditional working-class method of striking.

The concept of working-class solidarity is also being enriched with new content. If in the past factory workers could expect support for their strikes and other manifestations mainly from other industrial workers, today we have numerous instances of the strike movement of the working class being supported by people from the most diverse walks of life and vice versa. A vivid demonstration of this was the powerful upsurge of class struggle in France in the spring of 1968, when over ten million people joined the general strike.

Finally, convincing proof of the correctness of Marxist views is provided by the composition of the mass Communist parties in the capitalist countries, in which practically all categories of wage earner are represented along with the working class. This shows, not that the Communist parties have ceased to be proletarian as bourgeois sociologists vainly try to prove, but that the interests of all categories of working people are gradually drawing closer to the interests of the working class, and they are becoming more imbued with its ideology and accepting the leadership of its party in the process.

So, however much capitalism might try to modernise and bring itself up to date, it is saddled with a plurality of parties for the duration. It will always have at least two parties. However, the existence of a plurality of parties in this sense must on no account be confused with the bourgeois *multi-party system* in the sense of competition and alternation in office of political parties. The social facts behind this are that the bourgeoisie like any other class is not homogeneous and its different strata often have conflicting interests. Bourgeois parties form an alliance or announce a "truce" at times of sharp revolutionary crisis and act independently in calmer periods. Although essentially non-antagonistic in character, their struggle to share in government occasionally becomes extremely fierce.¹

¹ John Strachey, an eminent theoretician of the British labour movement, writes: "The State, they declare, is nothing but the instrument of the great capitalists. . . . The fact is that in the conditions of contemporary democracy the State and its vast powers are rather prizes for which all sorts of interests are struggling and competing." (J. Strachey, *Contemporary Capitalism*, London 1956, p. 246). Strachey believes he has "caught out" Marxism here, whereas

The bourgeois multi-party system is basically no more than the political form of a struggle for power waged within the framework of the established order and not directed against its foundations. It is essentially based on a negative rather than a positive principle: that of preventing the revolutionary party of the proletariat from coming to power.

At the dawn of capitalism the proletariat was simply barred from official participation in the struggle for influence in government, being accorded the role of onlooker, its party remaining beyond the pale of official society. As the workers' movement developed, however, the bourgeoisie were forced to make concessions, although extremely loth to do so. Suffice it to recall with what horror the respectable bourgeois greeted the first social-democratic governments. In fact his fears were soon allayed, since it turned out that Right-wing social-democrats do not encroach on the pillars of the capitalist establishment and are prepared to play the constitutional game strictly according to the rules.

While the bourgeoisie did not find even the limited reforms the social-democratic governments introduced under pressure from the masses exactly to their taste, they just had to put up with it. What is more, bourgeois politicians not only realised the need to adjust to new conditions, they even appreciated the advantages to be derived from including the Right-wing socialists in parliamentary government.

Now we can ask the question: Does the multi-party system really "guarantee" democracy, as bourgeois propaganda claims? The answer is: It certainly does not. This political form is in itself unable to ensure either stable democratic institutions permitting the working class and its allies to organise themselves for the defence of their interests, let alone the pursuance of a policy in the interests of the majority of the population. Such ends are generally

in actual fact he is only showing a superficial approach to the question. That "all sorts of interests are struggling and competing" for influence in the contemporary bourgeois State does not alter the fact that it ultimately remains the instrument of the political domination of monopoly capital. The struggle of interests is primarily a struggle between different groups of the ruling class for its share of the State cake. A vivid example of this is the alternating government by Republican and Democratic parties in the United States, where the party coming into office secures the key positions in the State apparatus, leading diplomatic posts, good orders, etc., for its own group of monopoly capital.

attained as a result of political struggle by the working people outside the mechanism of alternation of parties in office.

At the same time it would be a mistake to underestimate the democratic content of the multi-party system. The very fact of inter-party competition in the struggle for power makes possible some organisation of public opinion around progressive slogans. The splurge of information on social and other matters that accompanies election campaigns arms the progressive forces with a better understanding of the mysteries of government and helps bring to light various cunning devices and tricks employed by the bourgeois politicians. The multi-party system, especially when it has become part of the tradition of political life, prevents to some extent the development of such anti-democratic tendencies as the government usurping the functions of parliament, graft and corruption among leading officials and the higher echelons of the civil service, a complete link-up or merger between the government and the business world, etc.

Since the one-party system in the conditions of capitalism is tantamount to overt dictatorship of the monopolies, we can agree with those theoreticians of bourgeois democracy who express alarm over the growing tendency towards decline and decay of the traditional multi-party system. As Enrico Opocher writes, "In almost all the democracies of Western Europe, a phenomenon called 'partocracy' has appeared; it represents on the institutional plane the transition from the system of the plurality of parties to that of the single party—from the subordination of parties to the state to the subordination of the state to a dominant party. This means, in general terms, that the parties have assumed a monopoly of political power, that the 'center of sovereignty' has been transferred from the will of the people to the will of the 'elites' in control of the parties."¹

On the other hand, the supporters of the one-party system, technocracy or so-called "controlled democracy" attack the multi-party system for being a serious obstacle to the achievement of their political ideals. The well-known French sociologist and philosopher, Louis Rougier, criticises it for its weakness and inability to ensure effective control. He describes the Fourth Republic as follows: "We have seen ministers running to the bureau of their parliamentary group to establish their attitude before going to a cabinet meeting.

¹ *Political Thought Since World War II*, Ed. by W. J. Stankiewicz, New York, 1964, p. 61.

We have seen parties withdrawing their ministers before the ministry has lost its majority. We see them daily fulminating excommunications against those who in order to obey their own consciences infringe party discipline. Duty to the party has come to take precedence over duty to the nation."¹ And further on: "The voter has no choice of candidates: this choice belongs to the party bureau. The voter has no longer even a choice of parties: he is deprived of this by coalitions."²

Rougier campaigns for technocracy, he is a declared opponent of any kind of party system. However, nobody can surely be expected to accept that non-party government by technicians is possible in present-day capitalist society. So that the voter who is being "deprived" of a choice is in fact being offered merely the most banal form of one-party system.

Still fiercer attacks on the multi-party system are launched by frank supporters of a regime of personal power and those to the Right of them, up to and including the fascists. In view of all this, we must conclude that, despite its class limitations, the multi-party system represents one of the most important institutions of bourgeois democracy. The attitude of Marxists to these institutions is well-known: the working class and its party not only struggle for their preservation under capitalism but also employ the democratic principles and forms, won during the age-long struggle of the popular masses, to overthrow the capitalist system. After the victory of the proletariat democratic forms are imbued with new social content. Of course, by no means all of them are suitable and applicable in the fundamentally new socio-economic conditions: some require considerable remodelling, while others are totally inappropriate.

What exactly is the position as regards the multi-party system in conditions of socialism?

To begin with it must be noted that neither in the works of the founders of the theory of scientific communism nor in documents of the international communist movement is it anywhere stated that socialism precludes a plurality of parties. On the theoretical plane the question of the possibility (or rather, permissibility) of employing this system simply did not arise for Marxists at first, since it was supposed that the proletariat organises itself in one party only which struggles for the triumph of socialist revolu-

¹ Louis Rougier, *L'erreur de la démocratie française*, Paris, 1969, p. 105.

² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

tion and then naturally directs and supervises the building of socialism.

The schism in the workers' movement produced by the defection of the leaders of Western social-democracy from revolutionary Marxism in favour of a course of conciliation with the bourgeoisie did not radically alter the situation. In a revolutionary situation Communist parties were not only quite unable to co-operate with the opportunist parties of the Second International but were forced to wage a resolute, stubborn struggle against them. There could be no question of a multi-party system, for example, when the Russian Mensheviks openly defected to the camp of the enemies of socialism and the German social-democrats played part in the savage suppression of the 1918 revolution in Germany.

But if there was no reason for the question of a multi-party system to be examined in theory initially, it was soon to be raised by the actual events of the revolution.

The supreme legislative body created by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, was multi-party in composition. Its members included 62 Bolsheviks, 29 Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, 6 Menshevik Internationalists, 3 Ukrainian Socialists and 1 Maximalist (Socialist-Revolutionary). Having acquired an absolute majority at the congress, the Bolsheviks clearly had the right to form a one-party government. Nevertheless, they saw fit to offer places in the new government to members of the second largest group of delegates, the Left-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries.

"Soviet power has been won in Russia, and the transfer of government from one Soviet party to another is guaranteed without any revolution, simply by a decision of the Soviets, simply by new elections of deputies to the Soviets. The majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets belonged to the Bolshevik Party. Therefore the only Soviet Government is the one formed by that Party. And everybody knows that the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, several hours prior to the formation of the new government, and to the presentation of the list of its members to the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, summoned to its session three of the most prominent members of the group of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Comrades Kamkov, Spiro and Karelin, and *invited them* to join the new government."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 303-04.

The leader of the proletarian revolution defined the terms of co-operation between parties in the Soviet Government clearly and precisely. "We stand firmly by the principle of Soviet power, i.e., the power of the *majority* obtained at the last Congress of Soviets. We agreed, and *still agree*, to share power with the minority in the Soviets, provided that minority loyally and honestly undertake to submit to the majority and carry out the programme, *approved by the whole* Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, for gradual, but firm and undeviating steps towards socialism."¹

Subsequently, a government including Left-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries was formed, though not for long. It became clear that the S-Rs had no intention of co-operating loyally with the Bolsheviks to carry out the programme of social transformation. Their move was simply a trick to gain time for the organisation of a counter-revolutionary uprising and the seizure of power. The natural result of such a policy was the elimination of the S-Rs and the formation of a one-party government.²

The next piece of historical experience that must be taken into account concerns the triumph of socialist revolution in a number of European and Asian countries after the Second World War. Here special conditions produced a new form of dictatorship of the proletariat, people's democracy. In Europe socialist revolution rose on the tide of the struggle against fascism in which the widest sections of society were involved. In Asia it grew out of the liberatory anti-colonial revolution, which was naturally national in character. The breadth of the social base predetermined co-operation between various political parties in the advance towards socialism, while the outstanding role played by the Communist parties in organising resistance to fascism and the struggle for national liberation ensured them the leading place in the multi-party system that was established.

This system is still functioning successfully in several socialist countries today. Its chief distinction is that it is an instrument of *permanent co-operation* between parties representing the specific interests of different sections of the population³ in governments

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 307.

² "In relation to the petty-bourgeois democrats our slogan was one of agreement, but we were forced to resort to terror" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 214).

³ The following parties take part in political life in the European socialist countries in addition to the Communist and Workers' Parties: in Poland, the

lead by the Communist Party, the latter representing the interests of all working people and supervising the whole process of socialist construction. The parties collaborating with the Communists in the building of the new society officially recognise the leading role of the Communist and Workers' parties and expressly state this in their Statutes.

The multi-party system in the countries that embarked on the path of socialist development after the war has stood the test of time. It has been the political expression of unity and co-operation between various strata of the working people under working-class leadership. The leading role of the Communist and Workers' parties in the national (popular) front ensured the successful transformation of social relations, and economic and cultural development of the socialist countries.

The programmes of several West European Communist parties involve provisions for a multi-party system, based on analysis of the conditions in which socialist revolution matures in developed capitalist countries with deep-going democratic traditions.

Thus a political resolution of the 18th Congress of the French Communist Party states that the Party "has rejected the thesis that a single party is an essential condition for socialist revolution and declared in favour of a multi-party system, guaranteed by the constitution of the new regime. Thus, all parties participating in the building of socialism can join the government as equal members, the place and authority of each depending on their contribution to the common cause and the trust the people place in them."

For all the variety of concrete forms of transition to socialism determined by historically conditioned situation in a given country, it remains beyond dispute as a general thesis that development towards socialism does not necessarily exclude the multi-party system, provided all the parties represent working sections of society co-operating in the building of socialism under the leadership of the working class.

United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party; in the GDR, the Democratic Peasants' Party, the National Democratic Party of Germany, the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany and the Christian Democratic Union of Germany; in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union; in Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Slovak Reconstruction Party and the Slovak Freedom Party (as is well-known, counter-revolutionary elements tried to oppose these parties to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, by attaching to them, to begin with, the role of an official opposition. These attempts failed).

Having got this much straight, we can now proceed to analyse the one-party system and assess its democratic content.

Democracy is not only an end but also a powerful means of social and economic development. The remarkable achievements the Soviet Union has accomplished in this respect in the half-century since the October Revolution are well known. The all-round development of Soviet society is the most convincing confirmation of the efficacy of the one-party system, the most weighty argument in its favour.

One additional remark must, however, be made in this connection. There is a view according to which the one-party system was necessary in its time and played a positive role in the special circumstances of the emergence and establishment of the first socialist society in history (fierce class struggle, counter-revolution and foreign military intervention, capitalist encirclement, etc.) but that it no longer corresponds to the requirements of mature socialism and is less effective than the multi-party system.

Thus, the eminent French sociologist, Maurice Duverger, wrote in an article entitled "Marxism and Democracy": "If a party is nothing other than the expression of a class, a plurality of parties corresponds to the class struggle, and the disappearance of classes leads to a single party. Only artificially then can one justify the existence in the socialist state of a pluralism that remains necessarily limited. But absolute identification 'party-class' does not correspond to reality. Even in the nineteenth century where it reached its maximum, it was never total. More often, the parties represent various different and opposed factions of the same class (for example, yesterday Jacobins and Girondists, today Conservatives, Christian-Democrats, Liberals and Radicals correspond to various elements of the bourgeoisie; Communists and Socialists express different categories of workers). Sometimes they even comprise elements from several classes (at present, the centre parties, the Socialists and even the Communists are supported at the same time by the workers and business people, small industrialists and farmers).

"Ultimately, the parties correspond to social strata rather than classes proper. . . ."¹

On the basis of these premises Duverger concludes that recognition by Marxists of the fact that parties can represent social strata

¹ *Le Monde*, 10 mars, 1966.

as well as classes "could open the way to a Marxist theory of political pluralism in an industrial socialist state, where the complexity of production conditions will inevitably maintain a diversity of situations"¹. The implication is that the multi-party system is the most appropriate for a socialist state in general (for all countries embarking on the path to socialism are gradually transformed into developed industrial states, this being one of their main aims).

It is impossible to agree with this. Marxists "recognised" long ago that parties may represent various strata of the same class. Indeed, it was they who discovered this principle, as can clearly be seen from the brilliant analysis of intra-class struggle to be found in Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, etc. Moreover, the possibility of building socialism in the conditions of a multi-party system (i.e., co-operation between parties supporting the socialism programme) has also been proved in practice. But it cannot be said that *only* the multi-party system corresponds to the requirements of industrially developed socialist society. And not because of adherence to any dogma, but simply because there are absolutely no arguments to support such an idea.

How can the general and specific interests of the various social strata best be taken into account: through competition between different political parties or coordination of these interests in the framework of one party and a single party policy? While the multi-party solution is not without its merits, it is nevertheless impossible not to see the tremendous advantages of the one-party solution, especially for those countries where such a system has already become a firmly-rooted political tradition.

The experience of the socialist countries shows that with either system the solution of all the diverse and complex problems encountered by socialism is to be found not in rivalry but rather in co-operation between classes and social strata under the leadership of the Communist Party. Such an approach is in accordance with the fundamental interests and requirements of the development of socialism, its constant, all-round progress.

The role of the Communist Party is well expressed in the following thesis of the Report of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party to its 9th Party Congress. "As international experience shows, in the conditions of socialism the activity of

¹ *Le Monde*, 10 mars, 1966.

several parties is also possible in principle. In our country the situation that emerged historically is such that we have only one party, the revolutionary Party of the working class, leading society. This situation increases rather than reduces the responsibility of the Party. The Party must work in close unity with the masses and involve in the implementation of the national aims representatives of different classes and strata of society, including those who still have certain objections to this or that political question or who have not completely accepted our outlook."

Not specious arguments but the actual practice of socialism shows quite clearly that the one-party system is capable of serving as the instrument of social development and ensuring social progress at all stages of construction of the new society.

CHAPTER 3

THE GUIDING AND UNIFYING FORCE

The effectiveness of the political system in socialist society where social development is entirely subordinated to the interests of the working people primarily depends on its ability to express these interests, regulate relations between the various classes and social strata and ensure their co-operation in the struggle for common goals. This is the best evidence of the effectiveness of the one-party system and also of the form of the multi-party system whereby all parties combine to form a national front and recognise the leading role of the Communist Party.

What of the scope and nature of the tasks involved in regulating social life? The answer is best sought in the class structure of socialist society, in the state of social relations.

The social composition of Soviet society in 1969 was as follows:
industrial, office and professional workers, 78.41 per cent;
collective farmers and co-operated artisans, 21.56 per cent;
unco-operated peasants and artisans, 0.03 per cent.

Soviet society consists of two classes, the workers and the peasants, with the intellectuals forming a further social group.

The labour and living conditions of Soviet workers, collective farmers and intellectuals are firmly linked today, and have been for a long time now, with public ownership of the means of production and the socialist economic system. The attitude to socialist ownership regarding it as the basis of public and personal welfare has developed to become almost "second nature" to Soviet people, the great majority of whom were born after the October Revolution. The public mode of production of material values is the fundamental condition for the unity of basic interests of all classes and strata in Soviet socialist society.

Another important reason for this unity of basic interests is the sharing of common goals. People of different social background who were involved in the process of revolutionary transformation and building socialism under the guidance of the working class and its communist vanguard were educated in the spirit of the Marxist-Leninist outlook and adopted the cause of the revolutionary proletariat as their own personal cause. This was the foundation upon which the socio-political and also the ideological unity of the whole Soviet people was forged.

The fact that all members of socialist society irrespective of their social background share common basic interests and goals is a fundamentally important characteristic feature of socialist society and determines its political superstructure. At the same time the latter must also take into account certain differences due to the division of society into classes and social strata persisting under socialism.

"The fact that the basic interests of all social groups and social cells of socialist society are common to all of them does not exclude the existence of specific group and personal interests. The productive forces and production relations at the first stage of development of the communist social formation, under socialism, have not yet reached a degree of maturity that removes the ground for non-correspondence between the personal interests of individuals and group interests (the specific interests of various social groups or collectives) and the interests of society as a whole."¹

In other words, social analysis of society must be developed in depth to include study of various strata or groups existing within the framework of the actual classes. Such strata or groups may be more or less clearly defined and highly vocal or only "make themselves heard" occasionally, but they cannot be ignored. Especially in the case of socialist society, where due to the absence of class antagonisms and the gradual drawing together and unification of their interests a situation may well occur where strata within the same class differ more from one another than strata belonging to different classes.

What criterion should we employ for defining strata or groups within a class? Clearly, it cannot be a question of class-forming features since they apply to the whole class. Such features can only be used partially and with reservations, and then only quan-

¹ *Classes, Social Strata and Groups in the USSR*, Moscow, 1968, p. 221 (in Russian).

tatively. Thus, all those belonging to a particular class are united by their common means of acquiring their share of the national income. However, within this general means of acquisition there may be highly diverse shades determining substantial differences in these people's social position.

The features that distinguish one social group from another involve first and foremost the material living conditions, their productive activity, cultural level, and their spiritual requirements and aspirations. In other words, the whole way of life determines the general character of a particular social group, and forms its common *interests*. These interests are a unifying factor for the group of people in question and at once distinguish them from adjacent social strata. We shall refer to these interests as "specific interests", the generally-accepted term in Soviet sociology.

What interests us most of all among the vast variety of specific interests are those that pervade the entire social structure and have a considerable impact on the whole way of life of society. Let us therefore examine several basic factors that determine the formation of social strata.

A) *The economic branch factor.* The conditions of very large sections of the population are affected by this. The importance attached to a particular sphere of public activity (industry, agriculture, construction, transportation, management, defence, education, science, the arts, etc.) largely determines the funds allocated, incomes, the provision of accommodation and various fringe benefits.

Lumbermen using identical equipment and machinery and equal as far as qualifications are concerned can have different incomes depending on whether they work for the Ministry of Forestry or the Ministry of Coal Mining. This is due to the practice of the state encouraging the development of particular industries and branches of the economy through large investments and various preferences, which has been a most important and necessary method of developing the national economy. This method has been employed with increasing restraint as the Soviet economy strengthened. Nevertheless, the objective conditions have not yet matured for ceasing to make the material position of those employed in a particular industry depend upon its importance to the national economy.

Indeed, it would seem likely that even given the most balanced economy, the need will remain to resort to this method in certain cases no doubt primarily for the purpose of attracting people to the areas and fields of activity where they are particularly needed.

Thus, the 24th Congress of the CPSU envisaged, along with an increase in minimum earnings for industrial, office and professional workers throughout the country, the introduction of income-related supplements for those employed in enterprises and organisations in Western Siberia, the Urals, certain areas of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the increase of such supplements for those employed in certain branches of the economy in parts of the Far East and Eastern Siberia, and an increase in the special benefits for people working in certain areas of the European North.

Naturally, the economic branch factor can serve as a criterion for separating social groups not only on the scale of the whole economic branch but also on the basis of sub-divisions of a branch (e.g., those employed in the synthetics industry among the workers in the chemical industry as a whole, mechanics among agricultural workers, etc.).

B) *The professional factor*, responsible for the most substantial differences in people's material and spiritual conditions. Why then do we accord it second place in our scheme after the economic branch factor?

The principle of payment according to one's work underlies the entire system of distribution in socialist society. The criterion for assessing this is the newly produced value or the measure of work rendered to society (quantity and quality). In practice this measure is determined mainly through such "fixed" indicators as a person's profession and qualifications. Therefore it is the professional factor that plays the decisive role in determining a person's material position and hence his social interest. As for material incentive in a particular field of productive activity, it ultimately expresses the evaluation of the "use-value" of the product, its usefulness to society. Such incentives play a subsidiary role among the factors determining the material position of a person (or group) in society.

Nevertheless, the professional factor does not usually have so large an influence on the formation of social strata as the economic branch factor. Thus, while one can undoubtedly take all the engineers working in the USSR and treat them as one social group with common interests and features, clearly this amorphous group is far less important than, say, the social group of builders, determined according to the economic branch factor, and including engineers, workers and everyone else employed in the building industry.

Similarly, although we can speak of a social group of mechanics, a mechanic in a state farm has far more clearly expressed common interests with the labourers on the farm and even farm workers in general than with a mechanic or turner in an engineering works. And this applies not only to the material aspect but also, and indeed especially, to the way people live, and their consequent spiritual requirements and demands.

At the same time, there are certain fields of activity (chiefly, involving intellectual work) for which the professional factor is decisive. This certainly applies to writers, artists, actors, musicians and others in some way concerned with the arts. This is probably because here the field of activity and the profession actually coincide.

Finally, there is a third category occupying an intermediate position: scientists, teachers and doctors. Each of these professions is the "basis" of its economic branch, without however exhausting it entirely. Thus scientists cannot do without the co-operation of engineers, technicians, laboratory assistants, accountants and various other professional categories. In exactly the same way, the health service in order to function smoothly relies not only on doctors, but also on a large number of nurses, pharmacists and other medical staff. Thus, the professional interests of the scientist or the doctor may "compete" with the interests of science or the health service as economic branches. It is hard to say which plays the most important role.

C) *The national factor.* The entire nations that form the multinational state and also compact national populations must be taken into account in analysing the social groups with specific interests.

D) *The territorial factor,* according to which the inhabitants of a particular place (area, town, region, etc.) are classified, where they form a reasonably stable community united by all kinds of common interests.

E) *Physiological factors (sex, age, health).* It need hardly be said that the social groups distinguished on this basis (children, adolescents, teenagers, women, old-age pensioners, invalids, etc.) are very clearly defined and have sharply expressed specific interests.

Such would seem to be the basic principles according to which social groups, or to be more precise, strata, can be classified. The "group" suggests greater stability and more clearly defined, precise limits and interests, and is hence closer to the concept "class",

while the general community of interests to which we are referring corresponds more to the concept of "stratum", which is less precise and admits a certain vagueness and overlapping. This is particularly important, in view of the fact that as a rule a person belongs to several communities (strata) formed on the basis of the principles listed above.

It must be stressed that the strata of which we are speaking have nothing in common with the layers or strata bourgeois sociologists are forever detecting, and with special zeal in socialist society.

Western sociologists "stratifying" capitalist society generally place the layers or strata they distinguish one upon the other, so that, at first sight, the stress seems to be on social inequality. In actual fact, however, the contrary is the case: the petty differences between the various strata conceal the fundamental divide between the bourgeoisie and the working classes.¹ The same approach, when applied to socialism, divides socialist society into unequal strata, thereby likening it to capitalism.

This use of the theory of stratification for propaganda purposes is extremely cunning, and is cleverly concealed by an outward mask of apparent objectivity (the same "impartial" approach to capitalism and socialism, with no allowances made!). However, some bourgeois sociologists and propagandists unwittingly give the game away. One of them is US political writer Kenneth Colegrove, who maintains that Soviet society is divided from top to bottom not into strata but into classes.²

Clearly, the author was afraid that the American schoolchildren for whom this manual was written would fail to grasp the meaning of the word "strata" and especially the implications of the subtle "exposures" contained in his theory of stratification. Therefore, for

¹ A modification of the strata idea is the so-called participation or "new anthropology" theory of the French sociologist Henri Théry. This involves the idea of participation in a group, through which the individual feels at once an inseparable part and relatively independent, preserving his individuality. The task of the sociologist is to note new social groups and help them to "become aware of themselves", to organise a "dialogue" between them and unite them in the name of common interests, to adjust the political and administrative structure to the new social context. Théry believes that his theory can help eliminate the antagonisms inherent in capitalist society (H. Théry, *Les groupes sociaux: forces vives? La participation et ses exigences*, Paris, 1964).

² Kenneth Colegrove, *Democracy Versus Communism*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1957.

purposes of popularisation, as it were, Colegrove somewhat simplifies the matter. Having noted that Marx, Engels and Lenin "promised to create a classless society", he goes on to declare that, alas, this was not achieved, and instead of less classes there are more.

Colegrove naturally fails to mention that according to Marxist theory the complete disappearance of classes is only achieved when the stage of full-blown communism is reached. Nor does he mention the fact that the exploiter classes are eliminated under socialism. For were he to speak of all this, he would be left without a case against the Communists.

These cunning devices are best left to their author's conscience, so let us concern ourselves here with the classes he discerned in Soviet society. Thus, there is the "class" which includes Komsomol (Youth League) members and university students, army sergeants, Stakhanovites, heroes of labour and skilled workers. Next there is a "class" including Communist Party members, junior officers, factory foremen, collective-farm managers and teachers. Another one includes persons occupying high government posts, officers and factory managers. Then comes the "class" of generals, senior university staff, top scientists, etc.

On exactly what principles is Colegrove's fantastic classification based?¹ They are not hard to find, for they are entirely superficial.

First, there is age: if you are a schoolchild, you're in one class, and when you become a student you pass into another. Second, your job, or professional rank. Thus, a private is in one class, a lance-corporal in the next, a lieutenant comes higher, and so on. According to this principle, Soviet marshals have spent their lives passing from "class" to "class"!

At the same time, although it is far from his intention to do so, Colegrove is in fact suggesting that there is no room for class antagonism in Soviet society. For if classes are formed according to the principle of age or station, the passage from one class to another is as simple and natural a process as ageing or being promoted at work, as recognition of increasing experience and knowledge,

¹ It is only fair to note that Colegrove has quite a lot of rivals when it comes to the fantastic. John Kosa, a Hungarian émigré, claims that there are eight classes in socialist society, among them "the upper cadre", "the middle cadre", "the lower cadre", "the activist", "outsiders" and even—wait for it!—"the enemies of the people"! (John Kosa, *Two Generations of Soviet Man. A Study in the Psychology of Communism*, University of North Carolina Press, 1962, pp. 66-75).

etc. Perhaps not every lieutenant becomes a marshal but to become a colonel or lieutenant-colonel lies well within the reach of every officer. And certainly every schoolchild of today will one day leave school and become a worker or a student, thereby graduating to the next class according the scheme of our American professor.

We have taken as an example one of the more patently absurd bourgeois sociological theories. However, many more cunning theories are equally unscientific. The analysis of Soviet society made by André Philip, a French Right-wing socialist theoretician, serves as a good example. According to Philip, there are five social groups in the USSR: the peasants, the workers, the managers, the intellectuals and the Party.¹

The first thing that strikes one here is the eclectic confusion of the concepts of "class" and "social group". Why the distinction between "managers" and intellectuals in general? Why does the Party, which includes members of all classes and sections of Soviet society, form a special "group"? Why, simply because this is necessary to substantiate the political views that follow.

Nevertheless, let us make a serious attempt to understand why the above social "groups" cannot be identified with social classes. To begin with, as already mentioned, they do not have their own independent class-forming features, and above all a special relationship to the means of production. An equally important reason is that their specific interests occupy a subordinate position in relation to class, and especially, national (in the sense, of the whole people) interests. The absence of antagonism in the horizontal cross section of society (i.e., between the classes) and in a vertical section (the individual-social group-class-the whole of society) is one of the greatest advantages of socialism, and a most important achievement of the proletarian revolution.

However, the absence of antagonisms does not mean that there are no contradictions at all. Interests, since they exist and have a specific character, can appear and in practice do appear in the most diverse relationships. Such relations are of three basic kinds: interests that coincide, neutral interests, and interests between which there are various degrees of contradiction. And although the latter are not antagonistic, they may on occasion become extremely sharp unless prompt and sensible steps are taken to resolve them.

¹ André Philip, *Histoire des faits économiques et sociaux de 1800 à nos jours*, Paris, 1963, Vol. II, pp. 49-55.

Such adjustment is naturally not automatic and requires a carefully devised social policy based on scientific analysis of all the social processes under way, taking into account not only national and class interests but also the specific interests of all sections of society.

Thus, it is a question, first of determining what social interests there are and, second, of harmonising them.

Both these tasks are exceptionally difficult. To begin with, only in very rare instances do we have before us a perfectly clear-cut, well-defined social group with precisely formulated specific demands. In the great majority of cases social layers lack definite boundaries and not infrequently reform round some newly arisen interest and for a limited period of time.

Moreover, very often the layer only exists potentially, and lies "dormant" until its unconscious common interest is somehow affected. Certain economic or social processes cause it to react and it springs to life and constitutes itself, sometime with unexpected results.

If it is difficult to determine specific interests, it is even harder to harmonise them: often the government must choose between equally legitimate and well-founded interests and give preference to one of them.

The most straightforward clear-cut example of this kind of situation is where allocations are made directly affecting the material position of people belonging to two more or less comparable social strata. Here the decision is based on two factors: whose need is greatest and the satisfaction of whose interests is most in accordance with the interests of society as a whole. Again, clearly no easy matter. Yet it is far simpler than is the case with many unknown quantities such as often arise in practice.

Take the preparation of the state budget for example. What a mass of complex problems, collisions and conflicts of interests! Between the basic social functions (production, construction, defence, education, science, the arts, management). Between central and local interests. Between productive and non-productive spheres, and so on and so forth. And when we get down to it, behind all these rather dry-sounding concepts—function, sphere, industry, economic branch, etc.—ultimately we must remember we are speaking of people's lives, real people with all their needs and requirements, hopes and disappointments, contentment or ill-feeling. Indeed, the budget is a kind of economic and political narrative poem which must have a general meaning, harmonised parts, sustained rhythm

and measure, and which requires great skill and knowledge before it can be written.

Yet the budget comes round once a year whereas all the questions involved in harmonising social interests must be solved daily and indeed hourly, for today but with sights trained on the year ahead and even the coming decade. They must be solved in such a way that in every major economic measure from allocation of capital investments to the passing of projects for industrial and housing schemes the political aspect of the matter is clearly visible: how it will effect this or that social layer, its relations with others, etc.

What is needed here, for the solution of all these questions which ultimately form the essence of state policy (Lenin defined politics as class relations, and by extension we can say that this involves relations between social layers too) is a firm scientific basis. Not subjective whim and personal wishes but a well-founded, sober, realistic appraisal taking into account all factors that can possibly be noted and evaluated at the present level of social science. Indeed, the development of social analysis and bringing its results to the attention of the widest possible sections of the public is one of the most effective means of combating subjectivism and preventing unfounded and especially patently erroneous decisions.

Social analysis, extensive application of scientific methods, are the essential basis for preparing a correct social policy. But the actual policy can only be the concern and responsibility of the political organisation society entrusts with governing the country and which has great authority with the working class, collective peasantry and people's intellectuals—in other words, the Communist Party.

It is the Marxist-Leninist party, expressing the common fundamental interests of all classes and layers of socialist society and the chief unifying force and vanguard of the whole people that is capable of harmonising the various specific interests, and ensuring that they are correctly reflected and taken into consideration in government policy.

The importance of this function of Party guidance of socialist society is stressed in the Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Party Congress as follows: "In raising and resolving problems of our political system's further development and questions of an ideological nature, the Central Committee's point of departure is that the Party's policy yields the required results only when it fully takes into account both the interests of the entire people and the interests of various classes and social groups, and directs them

into a single common channel." It goes on to say that "in its policy our Party has taken and will go on taking into consideration the interests of such large social groups as young people, women and pensioners. . . . Constant consideration for the general interests of our entire Union and for the interests of each of its constituent republics forms the substance of the Party's policy in this question."¹

Thus, the Communist Party bears the main responsibility for ensuring the unity of society and its advance towards the goals of socialist and communist construction.

The successful accomplishment of these tasks depends, in our opinion, on three basic factors or conditions: first, a high level of democratic development within the Party itself; second, a firm, reliable two-way link with the broad masses of working people and all sections of the population; and third, a rational and efficient system of relations between Party and Government. We propose to examine them in that order in the following three chapters.

¹ *24th Congress of the CPSU*, pp. 87, 90, 92.

DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE PARTY

Long before the October Revolution and the assumption of power by the Communists, Lenin had insisted on the need for everything to be done to ensure the development of democracy within the Party. He devoted special attention to this task after the revolution.

The socialist revolution was in practice, as it was regarded in theory, the job of the broad popular masses led by the proletariat. Only an organisation that was at once distinguished by unity of will and action and thoroughly democratic could carry it through and arouse the masses to growing political and labour activity.

One of the basic criteria of the democratic nature of any political organisation is its capacity for critical analysis of its own activity in order to bring to light its own mistakes and take effective measures to prevent their recurring in future. "It seems absolutely essential to me," wrote Marx, "for the party to . . . subject its own past activity to criticism and thus learn to act better."¹

This view has prevailed in the Soviet Communist Party. The 9th All-Russia Conference of the RCP(B) stated in its decisions: "Broader criticism of both local and central Party institutions is necessary in the internal life of the Party. The Central Committee should issue a circular indicating means of expanding criticism within the Party at general meetings."²

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 38, S. 510.

² *The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Central Committee Congresses, Conferences and Plenums*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1970, p. 192 (in Russian).

These decisions, it must be remembered, were passed in September 1920, i.e., at the time when the interventionists and White Army forces had still not been entirely driven from the country, and the very existence of Soviet government still hung in the balance. Yet here was the Party showing concern for "means of expanding criticism within the Party", regarding this as a source of strength and a condition for further successes.

The 10th Party Congress forbade the formation of factions, i.e., groups refusing to submit to the decisions of the majority and adopting a course of anti-Party opposition. Many bourgeois historians treat the time the congress was held, 1921, as marking a turning point in the development of the socialist revolution, when the Party "turned off" the path of democracy and the preconditions for the establishment of the personality cult were laid. From this they go on to deduce that party democracy is impossible without the existence of factions, the rather transparent implication being that: if you want to prove your devotion to democracy, go ahead and revive the right of the minority to form factions with their own programmes and political aims!

We can safely assert that no bourgeois party tolerates the existence of factions within its ranks for any length of time, let alone according them the official right to wage an organised struggle within the party against its programme, its policies and the decisions of the majority. Where factions do arise, the matter generally ends with their disbandment under threat of expulsion, or in their splitting away and forming of a new party. This is perfectly natural, since any political organisation is formed on the basis of ideological unity. As soon as there is any large degree of disunity or total disagreement, there is no longer any point in their continuing as part of the same organisation, as groups waging an open political struggle against one another.

The political life of the capitalist countries provides numerous examples of the strict discipline the bourgeois and social-democratic parties maintain in their own ranks. On several occasions in the last decade groups have been expelled (or called to order and threatened with expulsion) from the socialist parties of France and Italy and the British Labour Party for opposing the leader's policy or refusing to vote in Parliament as instructed by the party leadership.

However, let us not confine ourselves to pointing out the hypocrisy of bourgeois historians. After all, our purpose in examining

this question is not so much to respond to their attacks on socialism as to analyse all the aspects of the socialist political system and clearly perceive its paths of development.

As to the question of whether the right to form factions really does serve as the ultimate guarantee of intra-party democracy, the answer can only be: No. If only for the simple reason that it is itself an infringement of one of the fundamental principles of party democracy, namely that the decisions of the majority are binding for the minority. Since faction violates a democratic principle, it cannot be a guarantee of democracy, but on the contrary rather serves to encourage its frequent infringement within the party.

Indeed, to be perfectly serious about the matter, splitting action more often than not creates the type of emergency situation within the party that can lead to restriction of democracy. Faced with the threat of faction, the party majority often feel obliged to confer special powers on the governing bodies or even individuals and to adopt extreme measures.

The decisions of the 10th Party Congress were not in fact adhered to by the factionalists, who merely paid lip service to them while in practice continuing their splitting action and opposition to the Party line more fierce than ever. This was naturally resisted by the Party, and Stalin's role in the organisation of such resistance increased his authority tremendously. Clearly, it would be naive to suggest that this was the only reason for the appearance of the personality cult. There is no denying, however, that the anti-Party methods of action adopted by the opposition indirectly stimulated it.

Faction, far from being consonant with intra-Party democracy, is directly hostile to it. Faction, that is, in the precise meaning of the word. For deliberate or unconscious attempts to equate any argument and conflict of opinions with faction can be extremely dangerous. Whatever lies behind such a confusion—the misjudgement of honest but excessively suspicious Party members or malicious intent to provide an excuse for dealing with those who think differently—it hinders criticism and self-criticism, the demand for which sounded so loud and clear in the above-mentioned Party decision. That is why shortly after the 10th Congress the Party insistently warned against any attempts to turn condemnation and forbidding of faction against the development of reasonable, principled criticism of shortcomings.

"Only constant, vital ideological life can keep the Party as it developed prior to and during the revolution with constant critical

study of its past, correction of its mistakes and collective discussion of major questions. Only such methods of work as these can provide effective guarantees against episodic disagreements becoming factions with all the consequences noted above.

"In order to prevent this, the leading Party bodies must obey the voice of the broad Party masses, not regard every criticism as a manifestation of faction and thereby drive conscientious, disciplined Party members onto the path of isolation and faction."¹

Consistent application of the principle of democratic centralism is the guarantee of healthy development of the Party. This ensures, on the one hand, the effectiveness of the Party as a militant organisation, united by common goals, ideology and activity and, on the other, its vital and indissoluble link with the working class and all working people. Democratic centralism involves mandatory observance of Party Rules and regulations, ensuring the maximum of democracy with the maximum of discipline.

First and foremost this involves the right of every Communist to freely discuss questions concerning the policies and practical activities of the Party at Party meetings, conferences, congresses, Party committee sessions and in the Party press, make suggestions, table proposals and openly express and defend his opinion before the organisation has reached a decision.

From this it follows that any point of view or opinion expressed and defended before a decision has been passed by the relevant organisation, with the obvious exception of attacks on the basic programme ideas of the Party, can on no account serve as a basis for accusing a Party member of factionalism, and even less for any disciplinary action against him. Lenin noted: "...there will always be controversy and struggle in a party, all that is necessary is to confine them within Party bounds..."²

Article 26 of the CPSU Rules is of equally fundamental importance. It says: "The free and business-like discussion of questions of Party policy in individual Party organisations or in the Party as a whole is the inalienable right of every Party member and an important principle of intra-Party democracy. Only on the basis of intra-Party democracy is it possible to develop criticism and self-criticism and to strengthen Party discipline, which must be conscious and not mechanical."

¹ *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 502.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 450.

Several articles of the Rules set forth systematically the principles of intra-Party democracy, strict adherence to which can serve as an obstacle to any trends towards subjectivism and arbitrariness. Healthy democratic life for the Party involves as an essential condition the mandatory observance of such rules and principles as collective leadership, strict periodicity in convening the leading electoral bodies, etc.

The principal guarantee of intra-Party democracy (including scrupulous, non-formal observance of the Rules) lies in the development of the Party itself, activation of its political life, deepening of its democratic traditions. The 20th Congress of the CPSU, which condemned the Stalin personality cult and initiated the elimination of its effects, and the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee held in October 1964, which stimulated the solution of a number of essential problems of social development, both played an important role in this respect.

The 23rd Party Congress demonstrated the Party's will to do away with subjectivism and base the entire range of domestic and foreign policy on a consistently scientific basis. The need for further development of democracy within the Party was also stressed, in particular, in the following passage of the CPSU Central Committee report: "It is essential to pay greater attention to and respect the opinions and proposals of Communists, create conditions for extensive criticism and self-criticism so that Party organisations can at any moment correct any Communist who has deviated from the Party rules and prevent faults in the work from developing. Those who suppress criticism must be made liable to the severest penalties."¹

Five years later, the Central Committee stated in its report to the 24th Party Congress: "The experience of past years has convincingly shown that the surmounting of the consequences of the personality cult and also of subjectivistic errors has favourably affected the general political and, above all, the ideological situation in the country. We have been and remain true to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and shall never make any concessions in questions of ideology."²

The fact that we regard the growing maturity of the Party as a political organisation, the strengthening of Leninist norms and principles in its activity, i.e., historical or functional factors, as the

¹ 23rd Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1966, pp. 124-25.

² 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 123.

chief condition for intra-Party democracy, does not mean that institutional factors are to be entirely discounted. Indeed, the latter come to acquire increasing importance as democratic traditions become more firmly established in political life. In other words, *the more guarantees democratic institutions find in democratic traditions, the more capable they are of serving as guarantees for the latter.*

The growing maturity of the Party as a political organisation and its ability to ensure consistently scientific leadership of society depends to a very large extent on strict adherence to Lenin's principles of forming leading Party bodies.

In practice, a certain degree of division of labour, so to speak, within the Party leadership is inevitable, that is, specialisation in accordance with the talents and abilities of the active members it includes. It is well known that Lenin divided his comrades into theoreticians and practitioners, those best suited for organisational work with the masses and those who had the sort of mind and character that disposed them rather for administrative work in the Party apparatus. He attached tremendous importance to having the members of the Party leadership appointed according to their inclinations and capabilities, so that each person could apply his abilities to the best possible effect.

There was no question of narrow, permanent specialisation. As distinct from government bodies, whose direct function is administration, the central organs of the Party are called upon first and foremost to perform the function of political leadership. They must be composed of political figures who are well known to the Party and have earned in its ranks well-deserved recognition and authority, so that the Party can "see clearly, as in the palm of its hand, *all the activities* of every candidate for these high posts, must come to know even their personal characteristics, their strong and weak points, their victories and 'defeats'". . . .¹

These words of Lenin's express what is essentially the chief condition of a democratic system ensuring the advancement of the very best candidates possessing genuine authority for high posts in the Party.

Adherence to Leninist norms and principles of Party life has become one of the chief tasks in developing intra-Party democracy. The 23rd Congress of the CPSU introduced certain amendments to the Party Rules, the purpose of which is to ensure that with the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 117.

constant influx of new blood and change and renewal of the leading cadres, continuity and reasonable stability are maintained.

While having the right to bar from office, according to the appropriate established procedure, a candidate who is unsuccessful or unsuitable, the Party collective (either directly or through its representatives) also has the right to extend the tenure of office of a Communist who has shown himself particularly worthy and capable. This is perfectly in accordance with democratic principles and is undoubtedly most beneficial to the cause.

Two arguments are usually advanced in favour of so-called compulsory "rotation in office". It is supposed to serve to prevent, first, political professionalism and, second, the leader escaping the control of the Party rank and file. As for the first point, we do not propose to examine it for the time being, especially as it seems to us that an attempt to eliminate political professionalism entirely at the present stage of social development would be utopian and even harmful.

Nor is it difficult to spot the flaws in the second argument. If the Party collective is limited as regards choice of its leaders then the question of whether X remains in office for three terms or whether X, Y and Z hold office in turn is really immaterial. Whereas, if the Party collective is free to choose its leaders as it sees fit, there is nothing at all to prevent it from withholding its trust from a person who has not justified the hopes placed in him and honouring a more worthy person. In this case, to deprive the collective on purely formal grounds of the right to re-elect a leader it prefers for a second or even third term of office can surely serve no useful purpose.

Thus, "compulsory rotation in office" *cannot possibly serve as a real guarantee of intra-party democracy in an abnormal situation or be a hindrance in a normal situation*. This is not, of course, to be regarded as an outright rejection of the actual principle of rotation, which does in fact serve a useful purpose in the mechanism of socialist democracy.

Improvement of the democratic mechanism of the Party is in fact developing in the direction of the fullest implementation of Lenin's demand for the maximum open discussion in choosing and proposing candidates for leading bodies.

The great majority of CPSU organisations consist of a few dozen members. In such organisations all the members of the Party group know one another well and are able to nominate for the bureau or the post of secretary and vice-secretaries the most worthy and

authoritative of their colleagues. Moreover, in working together over the years people reveal not only their working and political qualities but various other traits of character that are of considerable importance when it comes to selecting candidates for administrative posts. A small collective is able to take all these details into account. Not to mention the fact that the work of the bureau is carried out in full view of all and every Communist can make his proposals or express criticism at any Party meeting.

The question of open discussion acquires a real practical importance when it comes to selecting candidates for big Party organisations and especially district, town and regional Party committees, and electing delegates to attend conferences and congresses.

While in the Party committee of a large factory, the shop (or departmental) Party organisations are more or less equally represented, naturally by no means all Party bodies can expect to have their representatives elected to the Party administrative bodies which are organised on a territorial principle. However, this defect of the representative system in general (we are speaking of the technical side of the matter, not the socio-political aspect) is quite successfully overcome when the nomination and election of Communists to leading Party bodies is undertaken in accordance with the principle of open discussion and all Party collectives take an active part in the examination and discussion of the candidates nominated.

Many ways of ensuring such open discussion have been used in CPSU practice. Clearly, however, the opportunities in this respect are far from exhausted. Many interesting forms and methods are employed in the parties of the socialist countries.

Obviously, each party has its own special features and not all new forms that have been tried out with success will produce the same results in different circumstances. Be that as it may, the mutual investigation and study of the experience of the fraternal parties can greatly enrich the store of ideas and theories on many various questions of party construction and help the search for suitable practical solutions.

A vital, developing organism like the Party constantly feels the need to improve its internal structure and its forms and methods of action. Such improvement helps further the development of democracy within the Party, and hence even more effective fulfilment of its highly responsible functions of leadership of socialist society.

CHAPTER 5

A FIRM LINK WITH THE WORKING PEOPLE

A firm link with the working people is another condition for effective Party leadership.

Today, when cybernetics are all the rage, practically every schoolboy knows that the effectiveness of any control system largely depends on the reliability of the inflow and outflow, the two-way link between the controller and the controlled.

Naturally, there are certain fundamental differences between a system for running society and a control system for automatic equipment. The latter require certain information in order to tell whether the system is functioning normally, or whether the conditions in which it is operating have changed and the system needs adjusting accordingly. On the other hand, the data received at the centres of "control" of society are not simply information but an insistent imperative impulse. No political organisation can function smoothly without receiving a continuous flow of data on the sentiments and demands of the various classes and social groups and reacting to them in some way or another.

If we introduce the features of the socio-political system of socialist society into this general description, then the need for uninterrupted links in all directions stands out in even higher relief. The socialist political system and the Communist Party exist for the people and serve the people. Moreover, "control", administration and leadership, are not intended to preserve the stability of the existing order but are exercised in the interests of its development and transition to the next, incomparably higher level (the building of communism).

A constant two-way link between the whole of society and its political organisation assumes primary, decisive importance. For it is the only basis on which policy-making can take into account all the various social interests, the essential current requirements and the long-term aims of communist construction.

The link between the ruling Communist Party and the working people is ensured above all by the broad representative composition of the Party itself.

At the time of its 24th Congress, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had 13,810,089 members and 645,232 candidates, a total of 14,455,321. The breakdown according to social composition was: industrial workers, 40.1 per cent, peasants (collective farmers), 15.1 per cent, office and professional workers and others 44.8 per cent; according to length of membership: less than 10 years, 47.9 per cent, 10-30 years, 47.2 years, over 30 years, 4.9 per cent; and according to educational level: higher (completed and uncompleted) 20.5 per cent, secondary, 32.8 per cent.

From the above it can be seen that the working class is very powerfully represented and together with the collective farmers forms an absolute majority. Moreover, it should be remembered that a large proportion of the office and professional workers are specialists in various branches of the national economy and are of worker and peasant origin. The structure of the CPSU, which includes the Communist parties of the Union republics as republican organisations, ensures that the specific requirements of the various peoples and nationalities of the multi-national Soviet state can always be taken into consideration in Party policy.

Party membership is based not on the group principle but on the individual principle, and the Party is composed not of the official representatives of different social groups but of people who subscribe to Marxist-Leninist doctrine, people who are convinced of the justness of the aims of the Party and are prepared to struggle to achieve them. Communists, irrespective of their social background, are primarily people who share the same views, and only in the second instance workers, farmers or intellectuals, young people or old people, Russians or Uzbeks, Ukrainians or Armenians. It is the priority accorded to the ideological principle that enables the Party to act as the authoritative political vanguard of society as a whole, and express its *unifying tendencies*. Otherwise it would be an impotent, ineffective organisation, constantly rent by internecine strife between conflicting group interests.

Although personal participation may not be the direct, or rather, the official channel of liaison between the Party and various units of the working people, it would be hard to overestimate its indirect importance. The fact that people share the same world outlook does not automatically erase all their differences. Each person carries the imprint of his own background and social environment with its particular way of life and moral traditions, and particular angle of approach to social problems, and his own hopes and requirements.

Every single Communist who takes an active part in preparing the Party policy and solving various practical questions requiring the attention of Party organisations, whether or not he realises it, inevitably draws on the accumulated experience and outlook of his class, of his social environment. Perfectly naturally therefore, in this way the Party not only receives valuable information about the sentiments and needs of various social groups, but takes direct account of them in its policies and decisions.

As everybody knows, Party membership is not based on any fixed quotas for the different classes and social strata. Any citizen of the Soviet Union who accepts the Programme and Rules of the Party, actively participates in the building of communism, works in a Party organisation, carries out the decisions of the Party and pays membership dues is entitled to be a Party member. In other words, the ranks of the Party are formed through a kind of process of natural selection, underlying which are objective factors which are not, and cannot be, identical for all classes and social groups (role in social production, level of political awareness, political activity, etc.).

At the same time, Communist parties are undertaking extensive organisational work to regulate their membership somewhat, on the basis of constant analysis of the results of Party development. In so doing, they attach great importance to correctly combining the proportion of experienced cadres and young people who have received a communist education in the Komsomol, and accepting more women into the ranks of the Party in accordance with their growing role in production and all spheres of social and public life.

As the Report to the 24th CPSU Congress stated: "Our task is to exert a regulating influence on the growth of the Party ranks, replenish them on the basis of individual selection of the most worthy representatives of the working class, the collective-farm peasantry and the intelligentsia, and make sure that the Party com-

position allows the CPSU to carry out its tasks in the best possible way."¹

The Communist Party pays special attention to increasing the working-class core in its composition. The working class is the vanguard of socialist revolution and the building of socialism, the consistent bearer of the ideas of scientific communism: it establishes its dictatorship in the interests of all the working people and then perfectly naturally plays the leading role in the state of the whole people. The Communist Party is by its very nature the party of the working class, and the leading position of the workers in the social composition corresponds to the objective requirements of development along the path of socialism and communism.

"Foremost, politically conscious workers, collective farmers and intellectuals, who are active in the building of communism, must be accepted in the CPSU strictly on the terms stipulated in the Party Rules. In the Party's social composition workers must continue to occupy the leading place,"² stated the 23rd Congress.

The Central Committee followed this course consistently and was able to report to the 24th Congress that of the three million new members admitted to the Party since the previous congress 1,600,000 or more than half, were workers. In such major industrial areas as Moscow, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Gorky, Donetsk, Karaganda and several others, the proportion was as high as 60-70 per cent.

The decisive influence of the working class in forming the political line is a most important guarantee against deviations from Marxism-Leninism that may result from a predominance of non-proletarian elements in the Party. That this danger exists hardly needs saying. It makes itself felt particularly at the early stages of building socialism and is expressed in such symptoms as the penetration into the ideology of the Marxist party of alien, even hostile, petty-bourgeois concepts of socialism and distortion of the Party political line. The majority of parties operating in countries with a predominantly petty-bourgeois population have been affected to some extent by this ailment. The example of the Chinese Communist Party clearly shows that a party that fails to take timely action to develop immunity to the danger from the "Left" may fall victim, if only temporarily, to alien forces, lose its Marxist-Leninist orientation and find itself in a state of profound political crisis.

¹ *24th Congress of the CPSU*, pp. 111-112.

² *23rd Congress of the CPSU*, p. 302.

The likelihood of such a tragic outcome is distinctly reduced once socialism has been built and socialist society gradually becomes more mature. With the elimination of the exploiter classes and radical transformation of the labour and social conditions and fundamental way of life of the broad masses, socio-political unity is firmly established and Marxism-Leninism is confirmed as the one and only all-embracing ideology of all classes and strata of society.

Another channel linking the Party and society is through the entire system of governmental and public organisations. First come the Soviets and their executive bodies, representing the general interests of all sections of society and specific interests based on territorial factors. Then there are the trade unions, and to some extent the machinery of economic administration which diagnose and represent the interests of the social groups formed on the basis of industry and employment specifics.

There is also the Komsomol, and various women's and other public organisations. The USSR Collective Farm Council, established at the Third All-Union Collective Farmers' Congress in 1968, plays an important role in developing collective-farm democracy and bringing to light and dealing with various specific demands of the rural population.

This vast, all-embracing system includes organisations performing the most diverse functions. Some, like the trade unions, have as their purpose and official tasks the protection of certain concrete social interests. Strictly speaking, such tasks do not come within the scope of the ministries, whose main function is the organisation of production, ensuring the fulfilment of state plans, technological progress, etc. In practice, however, economic management of various departments represent and defend the interests of those employed in their particular branch of the economy every bit as zealously as the appropriate union. This is because the conditions of people's life and leisure have a direct impact on their labour productivity and output, and also of course, because the Party expects communist management to show the greatest concern for people's well-being. Indeed, the personal responsibility of the "manager" (be it factory manager, collective-farm chairman or commander of an army unit) for the well-being of the collective may be regarded as one of the basic principles of the Soviet political system.

We do not propose to examine the relative importance of government and public organisations in ensuring the link between the Party and society, their particular forms and methods of action. Let

us rather confine our attention to the question of the inflow that ensure that it is in fact a two-way link.

In socialist society, this does not simply involve the collection of data necessary for efficient management: it is a form of participation by the working people in government affairs, a method of people's government which is the essence of the entire political system.

Let us take a look then at the trade unions, one of the tasks of which is to represent and protect concrete interests of the working people.

The tasks of the unions in socialist society are very different from those they have to deal with in capitalist society. Once it is in power, the working class has a vital interest in the growth of productivity and all-round development of production, and this is impossible without a conscientious, creative attitude to work, initiative, strict labour discipline and economic interest displayed by millions of working people. In other words, what in the past was the concern of the employer and was carried out by the employees out of necessity or through coercion, becomes their own concern under socialism. *Hence the new function of the unions: they assume, together with the Communist Party of the working class and under its guidance, the task of organising labour in a new way and strive to achieve a maximum increase in its productivity.*

However, this fundamental change in the function of the unions certainly does not divest them of any of their original major functions, which are to protect the interests of the workers at their place of work and seek to obtain the best possible living and working conditions. Indeed, the efficiency of the unions as organisers of production is largely determined by the fact that they represent the worker collectives. "The trade unions," a resolution of the 11th Congress of the RCP(B) stated, "undoubtedly have an obligation to defend the interests of the working people, promote . . . a rise in their material living standards, continually correcting mistakes and exaggerations of the economic bodies. . . ."¹

In the last few years the Party has adopted a number of measures designed to increase the authority of the unions, channel their activities not only towards helping organise production but also towards protecting the interests of the workers at the factories. Under Soviet legislation, the unions enjoy extensive rights in this respect, and it is

¹ *The CPSU in Resolutions. . .*, Vol. 2, p. 319.

really a question of ensuring that they are fully realised and applied. The unions now have especially wide opportunities for their activities as a result of the current economic reform involving increased independence and economic initiative for enterprises.

"The safeguarding of the legitimate interests of the working people remains one of the basic tasks of the trade unions," says the Report to the 24th Party Congress. "The Party's line is to continue enhancing the role and efficiency of the trade unions. Without assuming petty tutelage over the trade unions, the Party organisations must do everything to promote their activity and initiative, strengthen them with cadres and make more exacting demands on Communists working in trade unions."¹

The Komsomol occupies an exceptionally important place in Soviet society, for its activities involve one of the largest and most dynamic social strata. It need hardly be stressed that the further development of society, and thus the future itself depends to a very great extent upon the young people, their general and ideological education, their work and political activity, their attitudes to society and approach to life, their scale of values and ethos, since each generation passes on its legacy to the next.

The prime purpose of the Komsomol was and remains to educate young people in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and the communist ethic, to involve them in working to build the new society and encourage them to participate in the affairs of their socialist state. The Party draws its basic reinforcements from the Komsomol, where the political force is moulded and shaped that will gradually take over from the older generation the leadership and guidance of the next stage of social development.

If we were to collect all the multifarious tasks that each new generation is called upon to solve and classify them, it would seem reasonable to divide them into the following two basic categories. The first involves assimilating all the values created by earlier generations, "inheriting" the legacy of their fathers. The second consists in appreciating their own place in life and determining the size of the contribution that they, the young people, are going to make. And so we come to the question of the relations between the generations.

From the Marxist standpoint, relations between the generations are objective in character, and, like any relations between forces

¹ 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 95.

representing different stages of development, have inherent contradictions.

It goes without saying that such contradictions have nothing hostile or antagonistic about them, since each generation can only live and advance on the basis of what the preceding generation has achieved. This continuity and interdependence assumes a special importance in conditions of socialism, where society has set itself a grandiose task calculated for several generations—building communism. But continuity is an inevitable feature of dialectical development: the new generation, relying on the achievements of the old, advances to discover what history withheld from the former.

"The Komsomol," L. I. Brezhnev declared in a speech at the 16th Komsomol Congress in 1970, "is called upon to preserve the revolutionary, militant and labour traditions of socialist society, continuously enrich and increase them, not resting content with the old experience but going ever forward."

One of the principal functions of the Komsomol is to reveal the specific interests of young people and help them become aware of their role and tasks. The ability of the Komsomol to be assistant and reserve of the Party depends very largely on the extent to which it succeeds in consistently revealing the mood and aspirations of young people.

"Further increase of the authority of the Komsomol and its efficiency and militancy largely depends on how it helps young people to put their basic life plans into practice, combine public and personal interests and satisfy reasonable demands."¹

Another major principle of Komsomol activity is ideological and political leadership of the youth organisation by the Communist Party. The methods by which this is carried out are intended to help young people find the right path in life and take their place in the great task of building the new society.

Here is what was said on this subject in the Report to the 24th Party Congress: "The different groups of our young people—young workers, collective farmers, specialists, students and schoolchildren—have their own special features. The Komsomol must be able to work with each of these groups. On it largely depends the correct and timely vocational orientation of young men and women, and

¹ Y. Tyazhelnikov, *50th Anniversary of the All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League*, 1968, p. 42 (in Russian).

the education of the rising generation in a spirit of profound respect for work at factories, farms and in the fields."¹

Thus, it can be seen that the functions of the two-way link between the working people and the government (the power exercised on their behalf and in their interests) are carried out by all public and government organisations of socialist society.

The function of the outflow link involves explaining to the working people the policy of the Party and Soviet government, the organisation of the workers to fulfil the current tasks of communist construction. The inflow involves discovering and presenting the wishes and demands of the working people, including the specific interests of various social strata, harmonising these interests and expressing the people's will in Party policy.

The firm, indissoluble link between the Party, the government and various sections of the working people is a powerful means of unifying all classes and strata of society. When people have a clear, precise idea of the material and intellectual requirements of each social stratum, they react correctly to government decisions, the prime purpose of which is to satisfy the most essential social interests. On the other hand, when the authorities are well informed of the needs and sentiments of each class and social group, they are able to ensure that their measures concerning distribution are better founded and more apt to help strengthen the unity of the whole people.

¹ 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 96.

CHAPTER 6

THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT

The relationship between the Party and government, the main ways in which the Party influences and directs the whole process of building the new society, is the third principal condition for efficient Party guidance.

This is undoubtedly one of the most complicated questions of all both in the theory of scientific communism and in the political practice of socialist countries. Attention is invariably focused on it at Communist Party congresses, practically all Party documents refer to it in one way or another and it is always giving rise to lively discussion in political literature and the press.

One of the reasons why it is always so much to the fore as a centre of attention is the dynamism of the subject itself. The rapid growth characteristic of socialism and the transition from stage to stage of socialist and communist construction require constant corrections and adjustments to the system of government and administration, and improvement of the forms and methods of Party leadership of society.

However, the variety of forms and methods of Party leadership can in no way affect the general principle of *recognition of the leading role of the Party in the building of socialism and communism*. To renounce this would be tantamount to rejecting the need for political leadership *per se*, and would almost certainly lead in practice to anarchy and chaos and eventually degeneration of the system, seriously threatening the accomplishments of the socialist revolution.

The experience of the Communist parties of the socialist countries

seeking to find optimal structures for organisation of government and administration is very interesting. Each party takes as its point of departure the conditions that obtain in its own country, taking into account the requirements of the particular stage of socialist development they have reached. Yet the basic approach to these questions is always the same, for the same underlying principles are involved. Hence the growing interest of the Communist and Workers' parties of the socialist countries in both theoretical research and practical solutions in this sphere. Hence the desire to exchange opinions and if necessary polemicise in order to discover through joint efforts the most rational ways to improve Party leadership of socialist society. Obviously, such arguments and discussions are of a friendly nature and are on no account to be regarded as attempts to interfere in the affairs of this or that Party and encroach on its sovereign right to resolve all its own problems independently.

However, there are people in the communist movement today who regard any attempt whatsoever to discuss the question of the relationship between Party and government as sacrilege. These dogmatists with blinkers only accept a situation where Party organisations from top to bottom simply give orders to the government representative bodies and especially the administrative apparatus. Although they use the irreproachable word "leadership", they mean by it relations of command and subordination and moreover equate this with dictatorship of the proletariat.

Nobody swore fidelity to the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat more emphatically and ardently than the Chinese leaders. Nowhere was the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat identified in such an extreme form with the commanding role of the Party than in the Chinese People's Republic. And never has dictatorship of the proletariat and the guiding role of the Party ever been so trampled underfoot and made such mockery of as during the Chinese "cultural revolution", when the Chinese Communist Party was deprived of leadership and its cadres crushed and even physically liquidated.

People who equate the dictatorship of the proletariat with Party dictatorship will not hear of the possibility of changing the methods of leadership in accordance with changed historical conditions. Although certain forms are obsolete and no longer bear any relation to existing social conditions, and the bankruptcy of the methods of *diktat* becomes increasingly obvious this does not seem to worry them in the slightest. They cling to their scheme with maniacal persistence.

Another view is basically to attempt to reconcile this same erroneous scheme with the requirements of the day and changing conditions. According to this view, leadership in the form of dictating is permissible and inevitable during the early stages of the revolution when radical socio-economic transformations are under way and a fierce class conflict is in progress. Then, after the elimination of the exploiter classes and the achievement of socio-political and ideological unity of society, the methods of Party leadership change accordingly.

This peculiar theory looks rather attractive at first sight. Indeed, it fits in perfectly well with the idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat completes its mission at a certain stage of development of socialism and the government of the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes the government of the whole people. Naturally this entails improvement in the forms of government and administration and is bound to affect the methods of Party leadership.

However, despite its positive element, this view too is unacceptable. There are at least three major objections to it.

First, and most simple, is the fact that it leads to misconstruction of the extremely important principle of dictatorship of the proletariat, giving undue emphasis to the dictatorship element, and attaching secondary importance to the democratic element, if not ignoring it altogether. Yet it is a well-known fact that, as the founders of Marxism conceived it and as it was introduced after the October Revolution, it was a widely representative system of government headed by the Communist Party as the leading ideological and political force.

The second objection is that this view regarding as it does the equation of the leading role of the Party with rule by *diktat* as perfectly regular, contradicts the historical facts. From the very first days in which the new political system was being created, Lenin was concerned to find an optimal relationship between the leading role of the Party and the functions of government bodies that would permit a plenipotentiary and hence effective system of popular representation, ensure the maximum opportunity for the working people to show initiative, and fully express the interests of the labouring classes and sections of the population. The major principle of practical realisation of the leading role of the Party, which is still valid today, had already been worked out, embodied in the following thesis of the Programme that was passed at the 8th Party Congress:

"The functions of Party collectives must on no account be confused with the functions of government bodies such as the Soviets. . . . The Party must conduct its decisions through Soviet bodies *in the framework of the Soviet Constitution*. The Party tries to *guide* the activity of the Soviets, but not to replace them. . . ."¹

However logical and seemingly attractive the attempt to identify dictatorial methods with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the need to modify them with the government of the whole people, it simply does not conform with the facts. Indeed, the fact that the need to improve forms and methods of Party leadership arose not only in the USSR but in a number of other socialist countries which have not yet reached the stage of government of the whole people is clear evidence to the contrary.

Lastly, the third and most serious objection concerns not so much the theory itself as its ultima ration, in that while rightly stressing the principle of development (it would be absurd to suppose that the methods of Party leadership remain unchanged at various stages of socialist and communist construction), it nevertheless contains an element of artificial contrast between the political forms of early and mature socialism. If (a) it is recognised that identifying the leading role of the Party with Party authoritarianism is necessary and correct for the early stages of development of socialism, (b) government is equated with dictatorial methods, and (c) this is declared an unacceptable state of affairs for mature socialism, then it is easy to draw the erroneous conclusion that some "separation of the Party from government" should occur in mature socialist society.

Identification of the leading role of the Party with authoritarian methods is incorrect for early as well as mature socialism. In any circumstances whatsoever it invariably leads to serious harmful consequences. To begin with, the representative institutions have their role reduced, becoming a kind of appendix of the appropriate Party organisations. When the latter take it upon themselves to tackle any at all important matters that require government attention, this involves completely unwarranted circumscription of the organs of government and administration, hampering their initiative.

A double loss ensues: first, the great power embodied in the system of popular representation is not fully tapped, and second, the working people develop a rather sceptical attitude to the representative institutions and begin to doubt their effectiveness.

¹ *The CPSU in Resolutions. . .*, Vol. 2, p. 77.

This leads to a certain disregard for socialist legality both on the part of officials and the general public. When Party organisations set about solving various practical matters (economic, social, etc.) usurping the administrative functions of government bodies, they are acting in an unconstitutional manner. And even if such measures are eminently correct in essence, they nevertheless produce harmful results since the idea that it is quite permissible to by-pass the law begins to take root in people's general attitudes. No considerations of the end justifying the means are valid here, since Party organisations have plenty of opportunity to ensure that correct decisions are taken in the framework of constitutional procedure.

Another negative result is two-way split in the administrative apparatus. As soon as one admits direct interference by Party organisations in the everyday administrative activity, they need to adjust their structure in accordance with their new functions, create the necessary departments and expand their staff. Politicians, such as Party workers should be, tend to be replaced by narrow specialists, which in turn leads to a predominance of pragmatism and a growing inability and unwillingness to deal with the basic tasks of the Party organisations—the tasks of ideological and political leadership. Part of the price of “parallelism” is a certain depersonalisation of government functions and lack of responsibility among officials. Indeed, where Party leadership is equated with practical administration it is quite impossible to place blame squarely on employees in the government executive apparatus for mistakes or failure to act. They can always use the excuse that the former were sanctioned (if only in that they were not countermanded) by the appropriate Party institution, and that the latter was justified by the absence of “orders”.

The more the Party and its organisations take it upon themselves to deal with current administrative matters, the less time and opportunity they have for ideological training of their cadres, strengthening links with the public at large, for scientific analysis of social processes and preparation of well-founded political solutions.¹ As a result,

¹ The 11th Congress of the RCP(B), 1922, according to Lenin's instructions contained in the Central Committee Report, wrote into its resolution: “The Party, while retaining for itself general leadership and direction of the whole policy of the Soviet state, must differentiate more clearly between its current work and the work of Soviet bodies, between its own apparatus and that of the Soviets. Such systematic differentiation ought to serve, on the one hand, to ensure more regular discussion and solution of questions of an economic

the leading role of the Party, far from being strengthened, is actually considerably weakened.

Paradoxical though it may seem at first sight, it is nonetheless perfectly true. When the Party organisation concentrates on administrative functions of government, petty tutelage of the administrative apparatus, it appears to be controlling everything. Yet this is purely an illusion: for minor current matters begin to cloud its view of new trends and prevent it from feeling the pulse of social life.

"The striving to transfer all functions of actual administration of government affairs to the Party would tend to undermine rather than increase its role and transform Party committees into ordinary administrative-executive bodies," said an editorial in the magazine *Partiinaya zhizn* (Party Life). "Practice has shown that it is those Party organisations and their committees that forget this and try to assume functions that do not strictly belong to them which suffer setbacks and fail to ensure successful fulfilment of the tasks of economic and cultural construction. In this case, instead of friendly, smooth co-operation between all organisations, confusion and turmoil arise, irresponsibility thrives and negligent officials have a convenient opportunity to pass the buck to the Party committee for everything and shelter behind it."

The more mature socialist society becomes, the more mature its social relations, economy, culture and way of life, the more complicated becomes the task of guiding its development. As the new society creates *its own basis*, to use Lenin's expression, so there are more opportunities for actually tackling such grandiose tasks as eliminating the vestiges of social inequality, abolishing classes and removing the differences between town and countryside, and between manual and brain work. The successful development of these processes is only possible provided there is deep understanding of the objective trends underlying them, through scientifically substantiated government economic and social policy.

On the other hand, the scientific and technological revolution is introducing more and more entirely new factors into social life and these are changing existing proportions and concepts, making it

nature by Soviet bodies at the same time increasing the responsibility of each Soviet official for the tasks with which he has been entrusted and, on the other hand, enable the Party to concentrate to the necessary extent on the basic Party work of general guidance of the work of all government bodies, and the education and organisation of the working masses." (*The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 315 [in Russian]).

necessary to amend perfectly good, well-founded theories as regards methods and schedules for solving various task. The ability to determine these factors in good time, evaluate them and derive maximum benefit from the fruits of technological progress, thus becomes a top priority.

Only one social force, the Party, is capable of efficiently solving all these responsible tasks, combining as it does in its activity ideology with politics and scientific theory with social practice, and being the bearer of accumulated knowledge and experience, on the one hand, and the authority of government, on the other. This is what determines the growing role of the Communist Party, which requires improvement of the forms and methods of Party leadership, a search for the optimal combination and distribution of functions between the Party and the socialist state.

When it comes to a definition of functions, it is customary to speak in terms of what the Party organisations should *not* do, such as: replacing the government bodies, practising petty tutelage, unwarranted interference in current administrative matters, etc. This approach, although necessary and justified to a certain extent, should only be regarded as an auxiliary means in the search for the optimal political structure. The basic solution is only to be found through a constructive approach, through determining what tasks derive from the functions of Party leadership, on what the Party concentrates its efforts and attention in present-day conditions.

There are three basic spheres of Party leadership of society: the political, the ideological and the organisational. It is a question of establishing the actual content of each of these spheres, their relationship to one another and the respective importance of the place they occupy, or should occupy, in the activities of the Party.

The chief function of the Communist Party is *political leadership*. This is where the sense of purpose socialist revolution imparts to the whole development of the society finds its fullest expression. "Politics involves the actual fate of millions of people."¹ *Thanks to the political leadership of the Party, society and government can devote their energies not only to preserving their existence and ensuring an increase in material and spiritual values, but can concentrate on planned, purposeful achievement of the aims of communist construction.* Since the policy of the Communist Party is based on Marxist-Leninist theory, it would be correct to describe the guiding

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 354.

function of the Party as ideological-political rather than simply political leadership. Political leadership can be divided (albeit somewhat arbitrarily) into two parts or stages: preparation of a political line and current politics. The Party pays particular attention to the former. The efficacy of Party leadership is determined above all by the Party's ability to see beyond current politics and concentrate on general matters of principle, questions of social development of wider scope. "The whole art of government and policy-making consists in being able to assess and know in good time where to concentrate your main forces and attention."¹

The Party political line is founded on its programmes which review the results of the tasks of the stage of communist construction in progress, and indicate long-term prospects. Legally speaking, the Programme, being a Party document, is only mandatory for Communists. In practice, however, thanks to the authority of the Communist Party and the undivided rule of Marxist-Leninist ideology in society, the Party Programme is accepted by all working people, by all state and public organisations as the theoretical basis from which they proceed in their activities, as a kind of *ideological constitution*.

Naturally, there is more to policy-making than simply preparing the Party Programme. In accordance with the ideas of the principal Party document, the Party congresses and plenary meetings of the Central Committee make important political decisions which are subsequently presented as authoritative recommendations to the supreme government bodies and after being specified become law and are embodied in practical activities.

The most characteristic example of such procedure is provided by the long-term economic development plans. The five-year-plan directives adopted by the Party congresses form the basis of documents produced by the State Planning Commission, Gosplan, and approved by the USSR Council of Ministers, and are then submitted for exhaustive comprehensive discussion in committees of the USSR Supreme Soviet and subsequently, after the introduction of amendments, are enacted by the supreme government body, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Current politics also falls into two parts: (1) the formulation of concrete decisions in accordance with the basic principles of the political line and (2) the implementation of the appropriate measures.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 164.

As a rule, most of the tasks are dealt with by the government bodies, whose activity is controlled and co-ordinated by the Party.

There are some very important exceptions to this rule however. First and foremost, there is an extensive sphere of the foreign policy of the socialist state which is determined by the internationalist duty of the victorious proletariat towards the revolutionary movement. Apart from links with the world communist movement, which are its direct concern, the Party also takes an active part in exercising such foreign policy functions of the state as developing fraternal relations with other socialist countries and strengthening the world socialist system; giving support to the national liberation movement and developing all-round co-operation with countries which have won their independence and embarked on the path of social progress; endeavouring to ensure more favourable external conditions for communist construction and making constant efforts to preserve peace and promote the principle of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems. In such matters the Party not only decides the political line but plays an active part, along with the government, in its implementation.

Then there are exceptional circumstances and events, such as international crises placing the country on the brink of war or directly threatening the life of the people and their socialist achievements. Obviously the party in power cannot fail to take the necessary practical decisions in such cases and is bound to assume full responsibility together with the government for every political step that is taken.

Surely there is a danger in various day-to-day practical situations of decisions ceasing to correspond to the Party political line and the ideological principle being lost (if only temporarily and in certain areas) in government and public life?

Clearly, such a danger is not to be excluded. Nevertheless, there are certain factors with the aid of which this can be fairly effectively prevented. The first of these is the *possibility the Party has of actively influencing current politics through its members* (an expression of the constitutional principle according to which the Party is the "leading nucleus of all organisations of the working people, both public and government), the second is the *organisation of various forms of public control and supervision*.

Both really belong to the *organisational* sphere of Party activity and its appropriate forms of leadership of all public and state organisations throughout the country.

Control here does not refer to some structural sub-division with a place of its own in the political system of socialism. In Soviet society in the past, such sub-divisions were formed and reorganised according to the requirements of the time, and the extent to which the role of the control function was understood. Lenin ascribed exceptional importance to this function. The system of Party-government control he devised was endowed with extensive powers. Indeed, it served as the chief obstacle to the tendency towards bureaucratisation of the state apparatus.

The present system of people's control and its organs perform an extremely important and useful job, bringing to light all kinds of abuses and violations of socialist legality, instance of excessive bureaucracy and red tape, shortcomings, omissions and miscalculations in administration.

However, in this particular case we are referring to *the control function in a far wider sense, ensuring fundamental conformity between current politics and the political line*. This concrete function belongs to the Party in fact, and is one of its chief prerogatives, being expressed in *the right to authoritative intervention in current policy matters whenever necessary, whenever there is sufficient justification for such intervention*.

Naturally, such interference is not tantamount to the right to suspend the measures taken by government and administrative bodies and overrule the legally established democratic procedure. It involves not circumvention of the law but action within its framework and is expressed in raising publicly the question of fundamental shortcomings in current policy measures, explaining their adverse effects to the working people, and submitting proposals to the appropriate government bodies on how to overcome them. This method of implementing the control function of the Party in no way contradicts the complete sovereignty of the representative bodies and requires no special constitutional reinforcement.

Apart from preparing the political line and control of current policy, *Party guidance also involves the Party playing a major part in the selection and deployment of leading cadres*. Like any other party elected by an absolute majority of the electorate and being accorded a corresponding number of places in the representative bodies, the Communist Party forms the government in socialist society.

However, although forming the government is a prerogative of the Communist Party as the ruling party, it by no means follows that it

directly appoints its own representatives to all the leading posts in the government and economic administration apparatus. How stubbornly and uncompromisingly Lenin fought against efforts to identify Party membership with the automatic right to occupy leading posts and the penetration into the ranks of the Party of people completely indifferent to its aims and who simply regard the Party card as a passport to a successful career is well known.

The appointment of officials to posts in government and economic apparatus falls entirely within the competence of the representative and executive bodies of the government and administration. However, it is quite understandable that the Party cannot stand aside entirely. The leading role of the Party is expressed here in the fact that it is the Party that develops the principles underlying the mechanism of selection and appointment of cadres and puts forward the scientifically substantiated criteria which serve as guidelines in the appointment of officials of various rank and professional background.

Finally, the Party organisations reserve the indisputable right to recommend in agreement with the unions for government posts people whose candidature has the approval and support of the relevant collectives. In this case, the Party is acting not in an authoritative role but as the expression of public opinion and the will of the working people.

Thus, preparation of the political line, control over the appropriate current policy measures and intervention in the latter where necessary, and organisation of the system of selection and deployment of cadres are the principal forms of Party political leadership.

Why only *political*, when organisational work too was discussed above? Because the conduct of Party policy through Communists working in government bodies, control and supervision to ensure that Party and government directives are carried out, and the selection and deployment of cadres all derive from the competence of the Party as the leading political force in society. Hence the importance of stressing the fact that the organisational activity carried out in the process of political guidance has nothing to do with administration but corresponds to Lenin's principles of defining the scope of the respective functions of Party and government bodies.

As well as ensuring decisive Party influence on the whole course of development of society, the above forms of leadership are at the same time in full conformity with the sovereignty of the representative bodies, in no way restricting their powers, or hampering their

initiative and independence. After all, the Party carries any of its recommendations and proposals through the system of popular representation and according to the procedure established by the constitution and legislation of the socialist state.

By way of illustration, let us recall how in 1920 the communist organisation of the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets, after discussing a bill "On Measures to Strengthen and Develop Peasant Agriculture", was for having one of the points of fundamental importance dropped. On behalf of the Central Committee Plenum, Lenin addressed the meeting of the Party organisation, and said in conclusion: "These are the considerations the C.C. was guided by and on the basis of which we have asked you to reconsider your decision, exchange opinions, and alter your decision if you deem it possible. . . ."¹

This is a typical example in the sense that here was a Party faction of the Congress of Soviets which according to Party discipline was obliged to carry out the decisions of the Party central bodies. Yet the Central Committee did not feel it could resort to issuing a straightforward instruction and tried to convince the deputies of the need to change their decision. Here we have a model not only of strict observance of socialist legality but also of deep respect for constitutional procedure and the sovereign rights of the people's elected representatives.

Another important area of Party guidance is *ideological* leadership. First and foremost we should distinguish a form which once again with equally good reason could be referred to the political function. Namely, the development of Marxist-Leninist theory and the fundamental and applied social sciences which *in toto* form the basis from which the Party proceeds in preparing its policy and also for the process of communist education of the working masses which it supervises.

The fact that the whole system of social relations and the organisation of production, labour and services is built on a scientific basis is a hallmark of socialism. As socialist society gradually becomes more mature, there is less and less room for spontaneous, elemental and uncontrolled processes. This is not because society becomes able to ignore objective laws but because through a deeper understanding of them it is capable of making them serve its own interests.

This feature of socialism is recognised even by bourgeois research-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 261.

chers, the more perceptive of whom were able to realise the advantages as much as four decades ago when the "planned" society was only just beginning to emerge in the Soviet Union. Without accepting communist ideas, they approached planning and other attributes of nascent socialism in much the same way as a businessman might look upon some technical innovations in his competitor's factory: they tried to introduce them themselves, especially since they didn't have to pay any patent fees. Naturally, the effect was only partial. Capitalism modernised itself and managed to adjust certain elements of planning in its needs, but this did not remove its basic defects, deriving from private ownership and labour exploitation.

In the meantime, while serious bourgeois science (especially practical economics) wrestled with the problem of transplanting certain innovations of socialism to capitalist soil, the propaganda apparatus of imperialism was—as it still is—busy trying to discredit them. The favourite method is to underline the ideological colouring of socialist policy. In itself, this means nothing, for Communists have never attempted to conceal that ideology pervades the whole political system of socialism, and indeed this is the strength and not the weakness of the new society. But bourgeois propaganda cunningly opposes ideology to science, ascribing a mystical character to the former. On this patently false basis they proceed to draw a parallel between the socialist system and theocratic regimes, and even fascism, on the extremely flimsy grounds that it, too, is based on "ideology". This also serves as a premise for speculation on the messianic nature of communism, which is alleged to be trying to forcefully convert all mankind to its faith.

All these theories are immediately shattered when confronted with the facts, the most important of which is that *Marxist-Leninist ideology is the first totally scientific ideology in history*, the only one that contains no elements of mysticism. Its strength lies not in faith but in firm conviction based on deep penetration of the objective trends and laws of social development. This is where it differs radically from both such unscientific ideologies as religion and "semi-scientific" ideologies, such as various brands of utopian socialism which whenever an attempt is made to put them into practice invariably lead to the creation of something approaching a religious sect. This is what happened to the followers of Saint-Simon, for example, who formed what was essentially a kind of masonic lodge with le Père Enfantin as High Priest.

There is a supreme criterion for passing final judgement on a system of views, distinguishing chemistry from alchemy, astronomy from astrology, and medicine from quackery, and that criterion is practice. Vast social experience now confirms the scientific nature of the proletarian ideology—the building of socialism in the USSR and socialist construction in other countries. To this we should add the fact that today bourgeois science (especially political science) is borrowing extensively from Marxist-Leninist theory, although drawing its own conclusions. Thus, it is simply unable to ignore, for instance, Marx's analysis of commodity production or Lenin's theory of imperialism.

Naturally, this does not mean that during the practical implementation of the Marxist-Leninist science of communism the possibility of mystical concepts and views creeping in is to be totally excluded. The advance towards socialism, assuming the character of a mass stream with the participation of broad petty-bourgeois strata, can easily undergo serious deformation, as witnessed by the "cultural revolution" and Mao personality cult in China. However, the point is that in this case we are dealing in fact with petty-bourgeois, and not proletarian, ideology, with a distortion of the principles and recommendations of Marxism-Leninism.

The world communist movement wages a determined struggle against any attempts to distort Marxist-Leninist revolutionary doctrine. The Communist and Workers' parties have repeatedly stressed in their joint documents that only consistent adherence to the principles of Marxist-Leninist science, allowing for the specifics of different countries, ensures successful development of the revolutionary process and the building of socialism. It is its status as a universal scientific theory constantly developing and being enriched by the experience of the working people's struggle for socialism throughout the world that permits Marxism-Leninism to provide answers to the vital problems of our time.

Serving as a reliable theoretical basis for Communist Party and socialist government policy, Marxism-Leninism must involve efforts to raise the level and scope of research in the social sciences.

If the need for extensive scientific research and application of its results in order to increase the efficacy of Party leadership is present at all stages of socialist development, it manifests itself with special force in developed socialist society. "In the present circumstances, the scale and tasks of our theoretical work are still greater. No society has ever stood in such great need of scientific theory as the socialist society. This is why theory must continue to blaze the way

for practice and ensure a strictly scientific approach to the management of the Soviet people's economic and cultural life. Theoretical work, conducted on a big scale, has to light the way for our Party like a bright beacon."¹

Today it is hard to establish goals in social policy without making a deep analysis of the social groups and a tentative, preliminary assessment of their probable reaction to various measures. Without using mathematical methods of programming and modelling economic data it is hard to devise a successful economic policy. Then it is hard to see how to improve management and organisation of production without considering the conclusions and recommendations of that rapidly developing new branch of economics, scientific labour organisation, or how to carry out propaganda and political agitation successfully without resort to sociological surveys, without acquiring data on the various categories of listeners, readers or viewers as the case may be, and knowing what their interests are, how they respond to various forms of propaganda. Lastly, the achievement of foreign policy aims now involves careful all-round analysis of the international situation, with close reference not only of the tactics employed by political parties but also of the character and mentality of the leading politicians responsible for decision-making.

The growing role of science in the development of socialist society has found official expression in a number of recent Party documents. A "scientific approach" has become the most important requirement of the present style of Party leadership. This was noted in the CPSU Central Committee Theses "The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution": "The organic unity between science and politics is one of the most important principles underlying Party leadership."²

Not only in the USSR but in other socialist countries too a search is currently under way for the most effective forms for achieving such unity between science and politics. Thus, the Institute of Social Sciences was founded in Hungary in May, 1966, under the auspices of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. The Institute has the status of a department of the Central Committee, its plans, research subjects and their results being examined by the Politbureau. Although the staff is fairly small, the Institute undertakes research over an extensive range of subjects by

¹ 23rd Congress of the CPSU, p. 144.

² 50th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, p. 41.

involving philosophers, economists, sociologists, lawyers and other experts in its work. A special public opinion research organisation is carrying on much important and interesting work in the German Democratic Republic.

Apart from organising research work in important areas of vital relevance that require scientifically founded political decisions, the Party also conducts general supervision of the development of the social sciences. This does not, however, involve direct intervention in the actual work process. The main methods and forms it takes are recommending subjects and general areas for study, helping to organise sociological research, providing opportunities for social and economic experimentation, principled criticism of mistakes due to deviations from Marxist-Leninist methodology and also unproductive or scholastic "deviations", organising public opinion to combat monopolisation of science and encourage open discussion and constructive debate, education of young social scientists and experts in a spirit of devotion to the communist cause, conscientiousness, modesty and honesty, and, finally, the propaganda of fruitful ideas in order to ensure that they are put into practice with a minimum of delay.

An important role here is played by the Party organisations at scientific research institutes and other establishments, which are able to make a highly professional evaluation of the merits of the work being done. In this way, the Party is kept well-informed and in a position to make well-founded recommendations as to the correct priorities for science deriving from the objective development of socialist society, and create the necessary conditions for creative work. "It is important that in every scientific collective there should be a really creative situation, an atmosphere of bold quest, fruitful discussion and comradely exactingness."¹

Roughly the same principles apply to guidance of the unions of creative workers (writers, artists, composers, film-makers, journalists, actors and theatrical workers) and artistic collectives. These principles exclude administrative interference in the process of artistic creation and attempts to limit the independent initiative of workers in the arts and literature and their organisations.

⁶⁰"We are for an attentive attitude to creative quests, for the full unfolding of the individuality of gifts and talents, for the diversity and wealth of forms and styles evolved on the basis of the method

¹ 24th Congress of the CPSU, pp. 104-05.

of socialist realism. The strength of Party leadership lies in the ability to spark the artist with enthusiasm for the lofty mission of serving the people and turn him into a convinced and ardent participant in the remaking of society along communist lines."¹

In more general terms, the task of ideological leadership consists in giving the working people a communist education. This task of truly enormous scale and complexity can be divided into several different parts: the inculcation of patriotic and internationalist awareness, a communist attitude to work, a collective sense, public-spiritedness, the shaping of a scientific world outlook and atheism, the establishment in society of the communist ethic, and much more besides. The whole socialist social system, the entire way of life and direct participation in labour and struggle for communism all militate towards this. However, along with such objective factors, a major role is played by purposeful educational work to influence people's minds and hearts through powerful modern propaganda means.

Propaganda and agitation are the most important and all-embracing form of the Party's ideological activity. Its purpose is not only to bring Marxist-Leninist ideology to the masses and solve the general tasks of communist education, but also to conduct day-by-day work to explain the policy of the Party and government, spread new progressive ideas derived from practical experience, and help shape public opinion and ensure a correct assessment of various current problems. This obviously requires a deep understanding of the psychology of various social strata, a differentiated approach to them, and the ability to apprehend the dominant "mood" of the moment (in society as a whole or a particular section of society).

Today, how effective propaganda is depends to a very large extent on how far it serves as a two-way channel of communication, how far it plays the role not only of the helm but also the detector of public opinion. The better it apprehends a problem, the better the answer it provides. The more sensitive it is to each movement in the life of the masses the more chance there is of deliberately channelling it in a useful direction.

Soviet propaganda has improved by leaps and bounds in the last few years. The quantity and range of available data covering domestic and international events has greatly increased, current

¹ 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 107.

social problems are being discussed more actively than ever, and such shortcomings as the absence of a differentiated approach to the audience and excessively abstract propaganda material have been largely overcome.

Public opinion polls and other forms of sociological surveys make it possible to establish more accurately which questions are causing the greatest concern in a given social milieu at a particular time, the slogans its members respond to most readily and what leaves them cold, reactions and attitudes to various events, etc. Proposals made on this basis help increase the effectiveness of propaganda work immeasurably.

In this connection, we can appropriately recall Lenin's words when he said: "We must at all costs... see to it that learning shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable catch-phrase (and we should admit in all frankness that this happens very often with us), that learning shall really become part of our very being, that it shall actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life."¹

Now that we have briefly reviewed the basic areas of Party leadership of society we can go on to examine the question of the relationship between the Party and government in socialist society in more concrete terms.

All Communists, the local Party cells first directly, and then through their representatives, take part in working out the political line, which is approved at Party congresses. The Central Committee, the supreme Party body in the period between congresses, adopts practical political decisions on their behalf and as their plenipotentiaries. Thus, the guiding role of the Party is expressed first and foremost in the decrees adopted by the congresses and the decisions and activities of the Central Committee. These are the bodies empowered to represent the collective will of the Party as the ruling socio-political force.

Local Party organisations see to the consistent implementation of Party and government policy, and co-ordinate the activities of government and public organisations. In doing so, they largely rely on the Communists working in these organisations, and concentrate on ideological-political guidance.

The resolution "On the Strengthening and New Tasks of the Party", adopted by the 11th Congress of the Communist Party in 1922,

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 488-89.

with Lenin's personal participation, contains the following statement: "The Party organisations should on no account interfere in the everyday work of the economic bodies and must refrain from issuing administrative instructions in the sphere of work of the Soviets in general. The Party organisations should guide the activity of the economic bodies, but on no account try to replace them or assume their responsibilities."¹

The CPSU Rules state that the Party committees should guide the Soviets through Party groups in them and not permit the functions of Party and other bodies to become confused or unnecessarily overlapping.

The CPSU Central Committee decree "On Measures to Further Improve the Work of District and Town Soviets of Working People's Deputies" (1971) says that overcoming shortcomings in the work of the Soviets and further improvement of their activity involves the improvement of Party guidance. There are still many cases in the work of local and town Party committees of replacement and petty tutelage of the Soviets, and Party decisions being adopted on questions wholly within the competence of the Soviets.

At the same time, the Communist Party is taking measures to ensure that the Soviets fulfil their functions more fully. The resolution of the 24th CPSU Congress on the Central Committee Report contains this statement: "The principle of accountability of executive organs to representative bodies should be observed more consistently, the prestige and activity of Deputies should be increased and so should their responsibility to the electorate. For this purpose, the Congress considers it expedient to introduce legislation defining the status of Soviet Deputies at all levels, their powers and rights, and the obligations of officials with regard to Deputies."²

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, preserving and developing the Leninist principles that underlie the political system of socialism, is constantly improving the efficiency of the system and its ability to resolve more and more complex economic and social tasks of communist construction.

¹ *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 344.

² *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 227.

CHAPTER 7

DIRECT AND REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

The socialist political system has clearly demonstrated its viability, and has done so moreover in a very short historical period. Little over fifty years ago Soviet government took over a backward and war-ruined country. Widespread illiteracy and lack of skilled manpower, a severe shortage of technicians, endemic poverty and limited resources for capital investment all made the first experiment in socialist construction an extremely difficult undertaking, hampered still further by the grim conditions of civil war and foreign intervention, and later sharp class struggle and constant threat from imperialism. And if the experiment was such an outstanding success in the face of these harsh odds, it was primarily due to the entirely new factors introduced by the socialist revolution—public ownership of the means of production, labour without exploitation, government by the working class led by the Communist Party, and the new socialist organisation and management of society.

Among the indisputable evidence of the efficacy of government and administration must be counted the level of economic and cultural development attained by the USSR, the system of social security and public education, the outstanding achievements in science and technology and much more besides—in short, all that we have today and of which we are justly proud. The same applies to the other socialist countries, which in the twenty-odd years of their existence have made creative use of the Soviet experience and established an efficient system of organisation and administration of the whole of social life.

The question as to whether socialism is capable of ensuring social progress has long since ceased to be relevant. But this does not mean at all that socialist democracy has reached its apogee. Indeed, on the contrary, the great advantage of socialism is that it is capable of constant improvement of social relations, means of organising people's government and methods of running society. It is from this point of view that we shall now try and examine a number of questions of democracy in socialist society.

First, a question of a general nature: that of the relationship between methods of direct and representative democracy, which provides the key to many questions of developing government and administration.

Direct democracy involves decision-making through all the citizens directly expressing their will in person. The simplest form of direct democracy in Soviet public life is voting at Party, trade-union or Komsomol meetings, production meetings at factories in which the whole collective takes part, and general meetings at collective farms, etc. Its supreme form is the referendum on a national or regional scale.

Representative democracy is the system whereby matters of state are examined and decided by the people's representatives, either elected or appointed. At first sight, this combination might appear debatable, since persons holding office *by appointment* are not fulfilling representative functions in the strictest sense of the word: strictly speaking, they are responsible not to the electorate but to the person or body that has appointed them. In fact, however, it is simply that we are here dealing with a mediate form of representation. The elected body, in creating the executive apparatus necessary for it to carry out its functions, delegates authority, at least in a limited form.

The relative merits and defects of representative and direct democracy have been a subject of debate from the very beginnings of political science. The debate became particularly lively on the eve of the English and French bourgeois revolutions, when attempts were being made to decide what form the new system of government, based at least officially on the principle of people's sovereignty, was going to take. There is hardly any need to say that even at the time the most shrewd thinkers, and above all the utopians, predicted that the very idea of democracy was bound to be of a limited nature, in conditions of private property and glaring social inequality. Yet this did not deter them from constructing an

ideal model of a system of government and calling for its practical achievement.

The history of political thought provides us with numerous arguments for and against the two basic forms of participation by citizens in the affairs of state. The supporters of direct democracy have stressed that in placing the reins of government in the hands of elected representatives the people thereby lose control over the course of the nation's affairs. Their opponents have objected to this on grounds that representation is an essential feature of the human race, since leadership is given to the most worthy and wise, who are capable of navigating the ship of state with greater intelligence and skill than the "despotic crowd".

The former point out that no sooner have the delegates to the Cortes, the States General or Parliament received their mandate than they at once forget all about those who elected them and the promises they made them. The latter have replied that the people's deputy cannot subject his entire activity to his mandate and that from the moment he is elected he no longer represents his own constituency alone but the whole country.¹ Both sides refer to the democracy of antiquity, the former singling out the plebeian assembly, the latter the Council of the 500 or the Senate, the former pointing to the wise decisions made through direct universal vote, the latter to the examples of when the "freemen of Athens" condemned to exile their leading politicians and military leaders, thereby prejudicing their own interests.

All these and similar arguments still give food for thought on the merits and defects of direct and representative democracy. Yet interesting and instructive though they are, they cannot provide an answer to the question of how modern society should be run. Above all, because no stable political system can simply be produced from

¹ Lester Pearson quotes the following curious statement by Edmund Burke, delivered to his constituents at Bristol Guildhall when the latter were trying to thrust their opinions on him on various matters. "... I did not obey your instructions. No. I conformed to the instructions of truth and Nature, and maintained your interest, against your opinions, with a constancy that becomes me. A representative worthy of you ought to be a person of stability. I am to look, indeed, to your opinions—but to such opinions as you and I *must* have five years hence. I was not to look to the flash of the day. I knew that you chose me, in my place, among with others, to be a pillar of the state, and not a weathercock on the top of the edifice, exalted for my levity and versatility, and of no use but to indicate the shiftings of every fashionable gale." (Lester B. Pearson, *Democracy in World Politics*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1955, pp. 108-09).

speculation and logical deductions, even though the latter are perfectly correct from the point of view of abstract logic. Just as there are objective economic laws, determining the nature of production and distribution, so there are objective socio-political trends that dictate this or that political system, and its particular trends towards development and improvement.

Political science, like any other of the social sciences, must above all proceed from real conditions of social life, for otherwise it is doomed to get bogged down in sterile speculation, and never get any further. Even if we were to accept that direct democracy is superior to representative forms of democracy, there is nothing we can do about it, since in the conditions of socialist society the presence of the state dictates the necessity not only for retaining the system of representation but for its further expansion and improvement.

Concentration of production, the deepening division of labour both within countries and on an international scale, and the growing need for co-operation and trade which are the principal trends of economic development in the age of the scientific and technological revolution all engender the need for the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, and planning and adjustment of production and consumption and also of investment, training manpower and the organisation of amenities and services, recreation facilities, etc. This is indeed what determines the objective need for transition to the new social system. Although capitalism does to some extent adapt itself to the requirements of the scientific and technological revolution, only socialism makes it possible to plan the economy scientifically and provides unlimited scope for the development of the productive forces.

The new problems arising before socialist society greatly expand the sphere of administration and complicate its functions. The government and its specialised bodies now have to attend (to some extent at least) to current administrative tasks over and above the fundamental political decisions regulating the process of economic, social and cultural development of society as a whole. This necessarily involves the creation of a multi-sectoral, highly qualified administrative apparatus.

During the last few decades there has been a clear tendency for this apparatus to grow constantly with the growing complexity of the functions of administration. If this process were to go on uninterrupted at its present rate, by the year 2000 planning of the na-

tional economy alone would involve approximately 80 per cent of the entire labour force. Even allowing for the fact that increased labour productivity would permit the remaining 15 to 20 per cent engaged in industry and agriculture to provide for the basic needs of society, such a misshapen social structure can hardly be regarded as an ideal state of affairs. It would mean, basically, that mankind had entered a blind alley, obliged to devote the greater part of its energies to regulating current production and hence unable to concentrate them on advancing to higher levels of civilisation.

Luckily, however, the outlook is not so grim. Effective means of preventing this from happening have already been found. One is automation of management and control work with the aid of modern cybernetics, the use of mathematical methods for solving complex economic tasks, in short applying the fruits of the scientific and technological revolution in the sphere of administration. Another involves applying methods reducing the need for centralised control of various national economic processes by modelling and the introduction of economic systems using the maximum of auto-control.

Economic reforms now being introduced in the USSR and several other socialist countries are intended, among other things, to produce an optimal administrative structure preserving the advantages of centralised planning and forecasting while giving a considerable degree of independence to individual factories and economic complexes. Further developments in applied social science promise many other practical improvements to existing administrative methods, reducing to a minimum the need for a special apparatus by involving the workers themselves and their public organisations in administration.

Yet however significant the results of all this, we can safely assume that (a) a certain growth (at least in absolute terms) in the management apparatus in the next few decades is objectively inevitable and essential, and (b) even given the most perfect organisation of society (i.e., when communism is finally achieved, with the withering away of the state and its replacement by communist public self-administration), there will still be a need for organs of centralised management of the processes of economic, social and cultural development and hence the appropriate administrative bodies.

Naturally, such bodies can only be formed on the basis of representation. However far direct democracy might develop, it cannot

cope entirely with all the major managerial and administrative functions without which socialist society could not exist. It has two basic limitations. First, the complexity of the procedure, which would render effective decision-making impossible. It would be not only absurd but suicidal to make current administrative business with a multitude of interim and largely relatively insignificant decisions directly dependent on the will of the whole of society or even separate sectors or cells of society.

If it is possible (in theory at least) to posit a situation where every single step, every single administrative measure is decided by a popular assembly or by referendum, in practice universal participation at, say, *the stage of preparation of decisions*, involving data collection and processing, discovering the requirements, formulating the matter, drawing up the draft, testing it experimentally, calculating possible effects, and so on and so forth, is clearly quite out of the question. All this highly essential work cannot be carried out without representative bodies and their apparatus.

As regards the complex economic and social processes of modern society, the need to entrust administration to those most qualified and well-informed is increased beyond measure by the fact that administration itself has become a field of activity in its own right requiring special scientific knowledge and training. By no means all questions of an economic and political nature can be understood without appropriate training, often for a long period, and the methods of direct democracy cannot guarantee a correct decision in all cases by any means. The cause of mistakes may equally well be incompetence or the perfectly natural tendency of people to be guided by their own interests.

There is a widespread fallacy that direct democracy is in itself somehow essentially superior to representative democracy. The supporters of this view used to simply equate communist public self-administration with direct democracy, and hence present representation as an exclusive property of the state, destined to disappear together with the withering away of the state when communism is achieved.

As time went by and there was more and more evidence of the impossibility of a highly organised society existing without centralised control based on the principle of representation, it became clear to all that the representative system was not a purely transient phenomenon. Yet the old attitude is still echoed in the way

the retention of representation under communism is still often treated as an unavoidable necessity.

The reason would seem to lie not only in the old tradition of communist thought but also in a certain irresistible "charm" of the term itself. On the surface the concept of "self-administration" suggests the methods of direct democracy, i.e., personal participation by the citizen in the solution of public affairs. The Marxist, scientific concept of communist self-administration, one need hardly mention, far from reducing it to direct management on the scale of separate production units, phalansteries or communes, refers to a complex, ramified administrative apparatus adapted to the requirements of centralised regulation of production and distribution.

Direct democracy, on the other hand, is most effective in solving questions on the scale of small parts of the social mechanism, whether in production or services. The only form of direct democracy that can be successfully applied to questions concerning the whole of society is, as already mentioned, the national referendum. However, once again, if we look at the matter a little more closely, the efficacy of this form can be seen to depend on the level of development of representative democracy.

Indeed, the very decision to hold a national referendum on an issue of major importance is taken by the organs of popular representation. Although constitutions generally stipulate the cases when a referendum is mandatory, they usually empower the central elective bodies to hold a referendum as they see fit. Article 49 of the Constitution of the USSR states that the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet "holds a country-wide survey (referendum) on its own initiative or the request of one of the union republics".

If a referendum is really going to help express the people's will it involves a tremendous amount of scrupulous work, in which everything is extremely important, from the manner in which the question is posed, objective explanation of the probable consequences of the alternative decisions, to strict observance of the rules of the referendum, generalisation of the results and drawing conclusions. In view of all this, it must be concluded that a referendum is as much a part of representative democracy as of direct democracy. Indeed, the very system of representation in itself presupposes eliciting the will of the people not only through elections, but later too (through deputies making progress reports to their constituents, mandates, through the press, etc.).

The foregoing is not intended to minimise the role of the methods of direct democracy. These do have an essential role to play, especially as a powerful auxiliary means of control over the activities of the representative bodies of government and administration, alongside the agencies envisaged by the system of popular representation itself. There is no doubt that major decisions where matters of principle are involved affecting essential questions of the life of society and the destiny of the nation should be submitted to the whole people for examination and approval. But it is equally obvious that many problems arising in production collectives or in territorial or local units can and must be solved on the basis of the will of all the members of the collective or organisation in question.

The fact remains that the vast majority of tasks involved in the development, organisation and administration of socialist society are decided primarily by methods of representative democracy.

This being so, we feel that both in the realm of theory and in the practical tasks of development of the state system the main attention should be devoted to the search for ways of improving popular representation.

CHAPTER 8

DEMOCRACY AND TECHNOCRACY

The term "technocracy" has gained wide currency during the last couple of decades in political literature, especially in the West. There has been a considerable number of works on the subject containing some very different, often diametrically opposed views and conclusions. For some, technocracy is a *fait accompli*, since the majority of highly developed capitalist countries, and the socialist countries too, allegedly already represent various forms of technocracy. Others speak of a marked tendency towards technocracy in various political regimes, while yet others regard it as a more or less distant prospect. Western authors either welcome this tendency or fiercely oppose it, depending on numerous factors, especially their social standpoint.

A social layer of specialist administrative officials arose not the other day but together with the state. The emergence of the state had as one of its various consequences the appearance of a new form of the division of labour: the function of managing the affairs of society became a separate sphere of activity and a special social layer took shape comprising people holding office in the central apparatus of government and various branches of administration such as the exchequer, the law courts, the police, the army, the diplomatic service, etc. These people had to have special knowledge and the appropriate skills, and studied their particular task and gained experience as they climbed up the hierarchical ladder.

However, such political professionalism was sharply restricted in one very important respect: it could guarantee an income, respect,

honour and glory, indeed, practically anything, but it could not bring real political power, which the ruling class clung on to tenaciously.

Of course, this should not be taken too literally. The ruling class endeavoured to keep the key posts in government to itself, forming the apex from its own milieu. But the most capable (or enterprising) members of other classes, and social groups (especially from the civil service) quite often managed to make a highly successful career, attaining the highest posts and honours.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that for the ancient Roman patrician, the landowner in tsarist Russia or the factory owner in capitalist England, it was not a civil service career but the fact that they belonged to the ruling class—nobility and relations, the number of serfs or amount of capital, respectively—that gave them access to power. The successful career men are rather the exception that proves the rule.

There is a fundamental difference, therefore, between the political professionalism in the past and the modern concept of technocracy. The former means government by those who rule, the latter, rule by those who govern.

It has proved impossible to establish by whom, when and where the term technocracy was first used, but it became an urgent matter in the thirties with the development of state-monopoly capitalism and the scientific and technological revolution, and especially with the rapid progress in management theory and the creation of the appropriate technical means. Increasing state intervention in the economic processes and attempts to plan or at least forecast economic development made it necessary for the bourgeois state to create completely new administrative branches and sub-divisions, which by their nature were to recruit staff primarily from among the scientific and technological intelligentsia.

Quite apart from all this, there is a rapidly growing need for special training for civil servants employed in the traditional spheres of government and administration. Take the military machine, for example, where the scientific and technological revolution has produced such a change that our ideas of the kind of people whose task is to organise it have undergone a radical transformation. Now no military apparatus can function at all efficiently without experts with a very extensive, and at the same time deep, knowledge of modern science and technology. The same applies to the fisc and propaganda, transport and communications, criminology

and intelligence: indeed in practically every branch of state administration there is a growing need for *increased competence*.

But this is not all. Perhaps most important of all is the unavoidable need to employ scientific methods in determining political aims, decision-making and the choice of practical methods for their implementation. Capitalism, which is having to abandon one position after another, being forced back step by step in the struggle with socialism, is ready to do anything it can in the interests of self-preservation, and is trying to adjust itself to the requirements of our age. As far as this is possible, that is. A truly scientific system of administration is, of course, incompatible with private ownership, competition, capitalist production anarchy, antagonistic class contradictions and rule by a narrow monopoly hierarchy. But certain elements of such a system, above all optimisation of political decisions, are being actively applied in the West.

A result of all this has been that the layer of highly qualified specialists working in the administrative apparatus of the monopolies and government departments or involved in their work as advisors, consultants, experts, etc., has become more and more important in the political life of the developed capitalist countries over the last couple of decades. Leading scientists, professors and publicists, with reputations as experts in different areas of domestic and foreign policy who have the confidence of the ruling circles, are frequently appointed to responsible administrative posts.

Bourgeois propaganda has hastened to use this process as evidence of its theory that the owners of capital are gradually losing control over the means of production and government policy, and capitalism is becoming transformed into a kind of "people's system". Reformist ideologists have offered a similar interpretation on changes in administration, which is essentially as follows. The scientific and technological revolution is radically altering the social structure of capitalism so that the economy is coming to be ruled by the technocrats who organise production and distribution. The nature and structure of government administration is changing accordingly, the technocrats coming to exert an increasing influence on domestic and foreign policy and establishing their political rule.

André Philip, a French reformist theoretician, maintains that owing to rapid scientific and technological progress and a number of other factors private ownership of the means of production is changing in essence and being transferred more and more from the hands of the capitalists and shareholders to the managers and

administrators. As a result, French society today is supposedly no longer capitalist, and France is moving towards if not socialist, then a socialised society, which will be controlled by a minority of technicians.¹ Thus, the major problem today is to ensure that socialisation of society is guided according to the principles of "renewed humanism", to make sure that it is not dominated by an aristocracy of experts and technocrats.

We are prepared to sympathise with certain fears of an "impending dictatorship of the technocrats". If the danger of such a dictatorship is proved to exist, then resources must be mobilised to combat it. But what is the basic conclusion the above views attempt to convey? A very simple one: namely, that the basic class enemy of the working people, the capitalist, no longer counts and the specialists are to blame for everything. The supporters of social progress are being told that it is not the private owner or even the principle of private ownership they should be opposing but the manager, the administrator, the consultant, the expert or what have you. The most amazing thing is that publicists who style themselves "Left-wing" can agree to render such a useful service to the ruling class and divert attention from them by providing another target.

But there is more to it than that. The theoreticians of reform fail to draw a clear distinction between the scientific and technological intellectuals in general and the group of specialists-administrators in particular. According to this approach, any engineer with an administrative function at a factory can be ascribed to the technocrat category and made responsible for the capitalist system.

In point of fact, the majority of scientists and technicians gravitate rather towards the proletariat as regards their social position and are its natural ally. This layer grows in number very rapidly in the conditions of scientific and technological revolution, thereby increasing its political weight and role in the development of society. And although the influence of bourgeois ideology noticeably affects this milieu, life itself and the logic of struggle for its basic interests tends to lead it to collaborate with the working class and oppose the reactionary policy of the monopolies.

As for the highly paid senior specialists-administrators, they side with the ruling class in capitalist society and clearly share with it the responsibility for the anti-popular policy of the monopolies. It

¹ André Philip, *La gauche. Mythes et réalités*, Paris, 1964, pp. 79-82.

is equally clear, however, that this social category does not personify the capitalist system.

As Lenin frequently pointed out, and experience has since shown in practically every revolution beginning with the October Revolution in Russia, the technicians (at least, the most honourable members of that category who were not indifferent to the destiny of their country and people) can be won over to the side of the victorious proletariat and take part in the socialist transformation of society.

Let us now take a look at exactly how real the threat of "technocratic dictatorship" is in capitalist conditions, that is, rule by specialists in both the arts and the sciences. If we accept the views, discussed above, and such a dictatorship is already a fact or is going to come about in the not too distant future, then we must assume that one of the following events has occurred (or is going to occur): (1) the technocrats have become so strong and seized the controls of government so firmly that they are capable of ruling without regard to the wishes of the ruling class and even in direct opposition to them; (2) the technocrats have coalesced with the ruling class; (3) the ruling class has become technocratic; (4) the ruling class has ceased to exist altogether.

Now, the first of these assumptions can be refuted in the simplest and most convincing way possible, namely by confrontation with the facts. However highly we assess the influence of, say, McGeorge Bundy, Kissinger or other US Presidential advisors, no serious researchers can surely possibly suggest that it is they who play the decisive role in determining the policies of US imperialism and the means by which it is pursued. The specialists who are being enlisted more and more extensively for consultations or to take a direct part in the apparatus of the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon and other government departments either formulate or at most amend the demands that emanate from the monopoly "brains trusts", are debated in the Chamber of Commerce or the national unions of employers federations, and make up the programme of the two major political parties of big business at the Miami Beach or Chicago congresses.

That the likelihood of the second assumption being true is highly remote can immediately be demonstrated not only on the basis of facts of political life but even by considerations of elementary logic. Despite the exceptionally high incomes of the specialists employed by the corporations or governments of the capitalist countries, there

remains a wide gulf between them, as wage earners, and the monopolists as clients, employers and proprietors.

The suggestion that the transference of economic administrative functions to the scientific and technological intelligentsia entails the disappearance of the basic classes of bourgeois society and that surplus value now goes to the technocrats merits special attention. The only true thing here is that the conditions of production and competitive struggle today are obliging the capitalists to transfer "management" of their economy to people with a special training in science and technology. Marx pointed to this as one of the signs of the parasitic nature of capitalism.

But the fact that the bourgeoisie entrusts management of production to specialists certainly does not mean that there has been any change in the socio-economic nature of capitalist ownership of the means of production. The decisive criterion of the property right is not management or even use of property, but actual ownership. It is the owners of capital who make the vast profits that skilful administrators manage to extract from the exploitation of labour. These administrators only receive a tiny fraction of these profits in the form of high incomes and bonuses as a reward for their zeal in increasing their masters' profits.

Moreover, speaking of the division of the functions of capital management and capital ownership, it is impossible not to see that it has its precise limit. However wide powers the specialists might be given, the monopolies always retain control over the course of operations and at the slightest signs of a hitch simply "off-load" the technocrats who have failed to live up to expectations. The same applies to the political sphere.

As for individual specialists that make the grade and rise to the ranks of the ruling class, their number is too small to threaten the disappearance of the technocrats. But even if the drain were to assume substantial proportions, this could never entail basic changes since going over to the ruling class would simply mean finally going over to *the positions* of the ruling classes so that no further reasons for establishing a technocratic regime would ensue.

In the third assumption we find echoes of the old familiar bourgeois propaganda thesis of technically qualified capitalists who thanks to their dedication, organisational ability and experience have both a material (through owning capital) and moral (through their ability) right to run things. According to this formulation of the matter, all monopolists and politicians in the bourgeois world

who display realism and reject primitive obscurantism in favour of trying to prolong the life of capitalism by adjusting to new requirements of the age must be ascribed to the category of technocrats.

This idea is patently absurd. The representatives of the monopoly bourgeoisie (even those who fully correspond to the concept of specialist on the personal plane and indeed are specialists) could only be regarded as technocrats on one "small" condition: namely, depriving them of capital and transferring them to the status of wage earners.

To sum up, clearly no technocratic dictatorship threatens or can possibly threaten the capitalist world. For however fast the number of technocrats increases, they can never become an independent political force¹, and do not represent a special form of production relations.

We are left then with the fourth assumption—the "disappearance" of the ruling class altogether.

"Feeding a population, housing, heating, lighting, clothing it, providing it with work and education and maintaining a stable currency are all technical problems that economic science and the sociological disciplines are advanced enough to resolve without the intervention of *a priori* systems and preconceived principles. . . . To approach a problem with a political ideology is, on the contrary, to seek a solution conforming not to the results that one proposes and the means of which one disposes, but to the principles by which one is inspired."²

Since the intervention of any political systems and ideological principles in the simple functions and activities of society is undesirable and even harmful, one is left with only one kind of person it would seem—the apolitical technician. This remarkable specimen does not represent any ruling class. In performing his administrative functions he is simply doing a job like any other member of society, say, a steel worker or a ploughman, a doctor or an agronomist.

While appealing to others to be guided not by preconceived principles but by realities, our French sociologist for some reason

¹ P. Bauchard puts this quite well in his book *Les technocrates et le pouvoir* (Paris, 1966, p. 11), where he points out that although the technocrats naively believe that they can use statesmen, in practice it is the political leaders who make use of them, basically leaving them in the shade and only bringing the spotlight to bear on them when they are in need of a scapegoat.

² Louis Rougier, *L'erreur de la démocratie française*, Paris, 1963, pp. 126-27.

considers himself exempt from this rule. One cannot help wondering how you can have "depoliticisation" in present-day capitalist society, a society rent by social contradictions between antagonistic classes, where these apolitical technicians (who are "above" party commitment) are to be found, and how Baron Rothschild, the banker, is to be talked into leaving the organisation of monetary transactions to the specialists.

The appeals of the supporters of technocracy for an end to intervention by political parties in administration really conceal, when all is said and done, support for the firm rule of one group of the ruling class. Our purpose in citing Rougier, therefore, was not to show the impossibility of a technocratic regime in capitalist conditions. The point is that his argument is widely used to support assertions that technocracy represents an equal threat to capitalism and socialism alike. The argument runs that, since with the industrialisation of modern society major social functions can be more and more fulfilled without taking ideological doctrines into consideration, without political "interference", in this industrial society (which is neither capitalist nor socialist) the technocracy will hold sway.

Western authors assess the extent of development of technocracy in socialist society differently, depending on their social orientation. Those who see technocracy as a blessing maintain that socialism lags far behind capitalism in this respect and that the socialist countries have a long way to go before the establishment of technocratic regimes. Those who see technocracy as an unmitigated evil, on the other hand, insist that socialist society has long since become technocratic and that the Western countries are not threatened by it for the time being.

But whatever their views, bourgeois and social-democratic sociologists are all unanimously agreed that there is a direct connection between socialism and technocracy. Many of them, moreover, try to find support for this contention in socialist theory itself. After all, didn't the founders of Marxism-Leninism actually say that the state and all political power would wither away after the revolution, and that management of things would replace management of people? What is this but a "prediction" of technocracy?

Western propaganda has recourse to the idea of socialist society becoming a technocracy not, of course, in order to recognise the important role of technicians and the science they represent in the administration of socialist society, but primarily as evidence of the

appearance of "a new ruling class"—Djilas's theory, which has been eagerly snapped up by the entire anti-communist propaganda machine.

Although we have already examined the question of the class composition of socialist society, let us return to it now and look at it from a slightly different standpoint.

That the idea of active participation of technicians in administration is derived from socialist doctrines in the broadest sense is perfectly true. The idea that the task of running society (through the state or some other, non-political system) should be entrusted to scientists and scholars was a constant feature of practically all utopian patterns of social organisation. In some cases philosophers were intended as connoisseurs of human nature and disinterested devotees of truth and justice. In others, preference went to mathematicians, physicists and other representatives of the precise sciences, as rational people capable of ensuring well-planned public works, and a rational system of social organisation. In Saint-Simon's ideal society ruling functions are entrusted entirely to these people headed by "the great mathematician", the personification of wisdom.

Indeed, Marx and Engels saw the most important distinctive feature of the socialist society of the future in the fact that it would be organised on a scientific basis and offer wide scope for the introduction of science into all spheres of human activity.

Indeed, Lenin repeatedly noted the tremendous role of science in the building of socialism and communism. He was all in favour of making extensive use of bourgeois technicians and appealed to scientists and scholars, to all the intellectuals of Russia, to join the Communists in the task they had assumed of transforming the country and raising the masses from darkness into realms of light.

Indeed, the Soviet government nurtured a numerous scientific and technical intelligentsia devoted to the ideas of communism and inseparably linked with the working class and collective farmers. Millions of highly trained technicians now run the country's industrial and agricultural enterprises, manage the service sphere, work in public education and the health service, and all other fields under government administration.

But neither in theory nor in practice has scientific socialism ever associated itself with a system of state organisation whereby power belonged to technicians as an independent political force. All documents of the CPSU and the Communist parties of other socialist

countries consistently stress that until communism has been built leadership of society by the working class and its revolutionary Party is essential.

Where, one wonders, in this crystal-clear theory can there possibly be a place for "specialist dictatorship" or technocracy?

Nor is it simply a question of theory. The ideological opponents of Marxism contend that socialist practice by no means corresponds to socialist theory, that the latter is purely a verbal barrage concealing the real historical process which has supposedly developed very differently from the way it was predicted by the founders of scientific communism.

Following in Djilas's wake, the "specialist in communist affairs" A. Meyer, a group of ex-members of the French Communist Party who use the pseudonym Dru, along with Radio Peking and Radio Tirana, plug the idea that a "social élite" or "New Class" has emerged in the USSR and other socialist countries.

The Marxist-Leninist parties emphatically reject this slanderous accusation. To realise at once how absolutely unfounded it is one has only to look at the matter like this: the emergence of a *new* ruling class ought to inevitably entail the replacement or at least a metamorphosis of forms of ownership and economic relations. Nothing of the sort has occurred in either the Soviet Union or other socialist countries: production relations have continued to develop on the original basis that was founded by the socialist revolution. Furthermore, such a radical change in the character of political power as the emergence of a new ruling class would inevitably entail rejection of the goals of the revolution, if not by word then at least by deed. This has not occurred. Indeed, even anti-communist propaganda has not the effrontery to deny that the communists are consistently and unswervingly achieving the goals based on Marxist-Leninist theory and inscribed in their programme documents.

Lastly, one of the basic features of a ruling élite is its more or less stable composition. Yet it is common knowledge that in the socialist countries the leading cadres undergo constant renewal to a considerable extent. There is a natural process whereby administrative staff improve their qualifications in accordance with the requirements of each successive stage of social development: the type of administrator changes *pari passu* with improvement of administrative theories.

It must be stressed that management is not the permanent privilege of any particular section of society. The social milieu of spe-

cialists who provide the cadres for the administrative apparatus is constantly replenished from all classes and social groups, although in certain areas with a relative preponderance of intellectuals.

Here, for example, is some general data on the social origins of engineers and technicians at the Urals Turbine Engine Works and the Pervouralsk Pipe Plant:¹

Enterprise	Total surveyed	Working-class background	Peasant background	Office and professional background
Turbine Engine Works	1,111	494	284	333
Pipe Plant . . .	1,263	531	401	331
Total	2,374	1,025	685	664

A similar survey carried out at the Eastern Coal-Chemistry Institute in Sverdlovsk with 136 scientists produced the following results (percentage)²:

Working-class background	Peasant background	Non-specialised office and professional	Specialised office and professional
30.9	12.5	39.0	17.6

Here we can see that the proportion of office and professional workers is considerably higher, but mainly owing to the number of low-skilled workers. As noted by M. N. Rutkevitch, the author of the research work from which these tables are quoted, the role of "auto-production" of specialists mostly affects the formation of the more highly qualified, scientific workers, for example.³

From an analysis of the Soviet education system in the same work the following conclusion was drawn: "The specialist stratum is at present being formed from all classes and social groups in our society, but the entry of our young people to the specialist ranks is so far still considerably higher from specialists' families. This

¹ See *Classes, Social Layers and Groups in the USSR*, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 159 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

applies particularly to teachers, doctors and scientists. The recruitment of engineers is more extensive from the working-class youth. The progressive process of the drawing together of the social groups and classes determines more and more even recruitment of specialists from all sections of society."¹

Probably the most interesting piece of evidence against the "New Class" thesis is the admission by Brzezinski and Huntington that "In contrast to the American pattern, the top Soviet political leaders in the past decade have come overwhelmingly from working-class or peasant families".²

Quoting Leonard Schapiro,³ they note that 128 members of the CPSU Central Committee elected in 1961 had working-class fathers, the fathers of 11 of them were office or professional workers and those of 4 were teachers, etc. By way of comparison, the figures are cited for the origin of 513 people having occupied the post of President, Vice-President, Chairman of the House of Representatives or member of the Government or Supreme Court of the USA between 1789 and 1953: upper class, 28; upper middle class, 430; middle class, 24; lower middle class (small traders, small farmers, etc.), 13; working class, 5.⁴

At the 24th CPSU Congress facts were quoted that give the broad picture of the social origins of the leading cadres in the USSR. Over 80 per cent of the present Party secretaries of the Union republics, Regional and District committees, the chairmen of the councils of ministers and the regional and district executive committees and some 70 per cent of the ministers and chairmen of USSR state committees began their activities as workers or peasants. Over half the managers of the leading factories in the country are ex-workers.

When speaking of "élitism", most bourgeois writers cite instances of bureaucracy and infringement of the norms and principles of

¹ Ibid., p. 211.

² Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Power: USA/USSR*, New York, 1964, p. 135.

³ Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, New York, 1959, p. 567; C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, New York, 1956, pp. 400-02.

⁴ Another interesting piece of evidence is that a survey conducted by Alain Gérard of 2,530 eminent Frenchmen, including statesmen and politicians, scholars and scientists, writers, industrialists, etc., revealed that 61 per cent were from the top 5 per cent of the population, 30 per cent from middle-class families, 6 per cent from farmer families and 3 per cent from working-class families.

socialist state administration. But this is quite unwarranted. As is fairly widely known, Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the very earliest days of Soviet government announced a firm struggle against the most tenacious and dangerous legacy of capitalism—bureaucracy.

As L. I. Brezhnev stressed, speaking as head of the CPSU delegation to the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969, the CPSU "resolutely fights bureaucratic tendencies against which the administrative apparatus is not fully guaranteed under socialism either".¹ While the Report to the 24th Party Congress contained the following passage: "Most of the employees of the state apparatus are highly trained, conscientious and considerate people. Their work merits the highest appreciation and respect. But it must be admitted that there still are callous officials, bureaucrats and boors. Their conduct evokes the just indignation of Soviet citizens. Relying on public support, the Party is and will go on making resolute efforts to achieve more efficiency in the work of the administrative apparatus."²

Active propaganda of democratic methods of management and administration is one way of helping overcome bureaucracy. The way to create a suitable social atmosphere for successful struggle against any form of bureaucracy is by teaching respect for competent and highly qualified administrative work.

Probably encouraging recognition of the *importance of administrative work and the administrative profession* would serve as an important preliminary step in this direction.

Administrative tasks are growing more and more complicated all the time and require a broader and more diversified training, high qualifications and a certain talent. Socialist society has a vested interest in ensuring that administration (not "authorising" but managing and administrating, resolving complex economic and cultural tasks) is entrusted to the best theorists and practitioners. This in no way threatens to produce a dictatorship by an intellectual élite, and "intellectocracy" or "scientocracy", since administration loses its authoritative function and is carried out under general public supervision.

What will be the position in communist society?

Theoretically, the question of the future of administration and administrators ought to be decided according to two basic tenets

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, pp. 197-98.

² *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 94.

of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the state. First, that every single member of society should participate in administration. Second, in developed communist society the state will wither away and with it the need to govern people.

"Capitalist culture," Lenin wrote in his *The State and Revolution*, "has created large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and on this basis the great majority of the functions of the old 'state power' have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary 'workmen's wages', and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of 'official grandeur'."¹

And further on: "We, the workers, shall organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid 'foremen and accountants' (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task, this is what we can and must *start* with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual 'withering away' of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order—an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery—an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the *special* functions of a special section of the population."²

Lenin is certainly not suggesting that administrative functions will vanish altogether. What he is saying is that in communist society their fulfilment will not involve any privileges and hence there will no longer be any material, objective reason for a special social layer of "officials".

Another important point is that everybody will carry out the functions of supervising and reporting *in turn*. Lenin expressed this

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 420-21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 426.

idea as "immediate introduction of control and supervision by *all*, so that *all* may become 'bureaucrats' for a time and that, therefore, *nobody* may be able to become a 'bureaucrat' ".¹

The operative words are "supervision", "superintending", "reporting", "control", etc., i.e., those functions of the old system of government that involve *upholding the social order and labour discipline*.

However, when all is said and done, the communist society of the future will itself provide the optimal solution to all this. It is not in the traditions of Marxist thought to attempt to guess the details of its organisation, and if we are trying to conceive certain essential principles it is only in order to be able to project backwards to our own time and test the tendencies that are currently under way. One of these is that optimal fulfilment of the economic organisation function in socialist society is requiring the participation of specialists from various fields of knowledge and with ever higher qualifications, and moreover with administrative experience, in other words, qualified in two fields.

Basically, there are two problems to be tackled: first, that of involving the broad mass of people in the ever more complicated functions of administration and, second, that of producing highly competent administrators.

¹ Ibid., Vol. 25, p. 481.

CHAPTER 9

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ADMINISTRATION

A *Pravda* article on the subject has this to say. "In present-day conditions the technical complexity of state administration, planning and preparing well-founded decisions (with scientific computations, calculations, statistics, etc.) is increasing substantially. The growing specialisation in administration also produces a greater need for special training. The question arises: How can all this be combined with the need for further development of democracy, the extension of mass participation in government, stepping up the activity of voters, deputies and the public at large, when so many administrative matters can only be properly dealt with by specialists?"¹

In answer to this question, the author cites a well-known statement by Lenin. "We demand that *training* in the work of state administration be conducted by class-conscious workers and soldiers and that this training be begun at once."² The aim must surely be to fully implement Lenin's instructions on the elaboration of a comprehensive science of management and the mastering of its basic principles by broad sections of the public.

This is undoubtedly an essential condition for any serious mass participation in government. A clear idea of the structure of the state system, the constitution and the basic branches of law, and the fundamentals of the modern science of management are a *sine qua non* for participation in the affairs of state.

¹ See: V. M. Chkhikvadze, "The Legal Science of Socialism", *Pravda*, January 10, 1968.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 113.

In the early days after the revolution objective conditions impeded aware mass participation in state affairs. "...So far we have not reached the stage at which the working people could participate in government. Apart from the law, there is still the level of culture, which you cannot subject to any law. The result of this low cultural level is that the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government *by the working people*, are in fact organs of government *for the working people* by the advanced section of the proletariat. . . ."¹

This situation was overcome in the course of the cultural revolution and the development of a universal public education system. Universal literacy, an all-embracing network of political education organised by the Party and Komsomol bodies, the teaching of social science at school, social science and political economy in secondary specialised schools and political economy, Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the theory of scientific communism in higher educational establishments all ensure that the working people achieve a high level of political knowledge.

This being so, it is really a question of finding the most effective means of extending public participation in administration now that it is more and more assuming the character of a precise science with all that this entails. We feel that the key to its solution is contained in the following idea of Lenin's: "The more resolutely we now have to stand for a ruthlessly firm government, for the dictatorship of individuals *in definite processes of work*, in definite aspects of *purely executive* functions, the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to counteract every shadow of a possibility of distorting the principles of Soviet government, in order repeatedly and tirelessly to weed out bureaucracy."²

Firstly, Lenin speaks of *varied* forms and methods of control. Indeed there can and ought to be various forms of mass participation corresponding to the various administrative functions. When we say that in socialist society all citizens should participate in state administration we naturally do not mean that they should all do so at the same time or all of the time. What is important is that: (a) each separate link of the administrative process should be under public control and (b) every citizen should have access to or be involved in some form of control.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, p. 275.

Secondly, the above passage makes the extremely important point that there must be no interference in certain executive processes that require individual management and personal responsibility. Let us try, in accordance with this idea of Lenin's, *to examine the process of administration (naturally, in the most general terms) to see at which stages it is necessary and permissible to have mass control and what might be the most appropriate forms of such control.*

To begin with, however, it is necessary to define what we mean by the administrative process and its stages.

The appearance of cybernetics led to a gradual extension of the general principles of control it involved to human society. This enabled us to re-examine all administrative processes and revise them, according to rational cybernetic principles. At the same time there was now some danger that the specifics of social management might be underestimated, especially in view of the political nature of the process. It is thus essential to bear in mind the social specifics of the administrative process in establishing its substance.

The supreme, ultimate aim of administration, expressed in the most general terms, is *optimisation of way the system functions*, employing the minimum effort and outlay to achieve the maximum effect.

The administrative process is necessarily of a cyclical, repetitive nature. Numerous attempts have been made to describe it in both Soviet and foreign literature, and as a rule such descriptions are in many ways rather similar. Professor V. G. Afanasyev in his *Scientific Management of Society*, proposes the following cycle: the preparing and adoption of a decision, organisation, adjustment, accounting and control. He rightly points out that this suggested division of the cycle is rather arbitrary.

"All the functions are interrelated, following one another in close succession, overlapping and interlocking to some extent. Thus, preparing and making the decision are essential not only at the beginning of the cycle but during organisation, adjustment, etc., (i.e., subsequent stages of the cycle). The function of organisation also comes into preparing the decision (planning, for example, has to be organised, too). Accounting and control also involve organisation. As a specific form of receiving information in the social process they are necessary both for making the administrative decision and organisation, and especially in adjustment of the system.

"None of these functions on its own or simply all of them added together give any real idea of management. Only as an organic

compound in dialectical interaction do they form a single control cycle." The above remarks are fully applicable to the following suggested break-down of the administrative cycle:

1. Data collection;
2. Assessment of data;
3. Stating the problem;
4. Preparing the draft decision;
5. Decision-making;
6. Organisation;
7. Routine control;
8. Adjustment;
9. Checking execution;
10. Assessing the results.

Before examining each stage in turn, attention must be drawn to two important points. First, it is forms of *supplementary* control that are intended here, carried out in the actual process of administration, since all the activities of the organs of control are based on democratic principles, representing the implementation of the policy of the CPSU and Soviet Government, and subject to control by the representative bodies. Second, the above scheme does not reflect the essential differences in the forms and methods of control at various levels of administration. They cannot possibly be the same, for example, at the district and regional level, let alone at the republican and nation-wide level.

Now let us analyse the different stages in turn.

1. *Data collection.* Being well-informed, having the facts at one's finger tips, has always been a basic condition for successful management and also the successful functioning of democratic principles. This task has been greatly complicated in our day and age by the vast increase in the flow of data.

One might even say that the flow of information was threatening to flood the administration sector when computer technology came to the rescue and made it possible to systematise the incoming data, sift it and select what is particularly appropriate, express it concisely, i.e., primary and partly secondary data processing. This has led to a tremendous increase in the scope of administration, making it possible to halt the process of decentralisation and distribution of functions that had inevitably ensued as a result of the mounting flood of data.

At the same time it has greatly increased the opportunities for the widest public control. Once processed, sorted and placed in

order of importance, the data can easily be presented to the whole reading and listening public. It is simply a question of this being recognised as necessary and being made a duty of the radio, television, the press and other mass information and propaganda media.

Along with daily information, keeping the public abreast of the latest domestic and international events, the *beaming of information* to the public (either as a whole, or certain sections directly concerned) assumes increasing importance. The latter kind of information may be divided into two parts. One is periodic information, including constantly collected and generalised statistical data on demographic questions, the development of the national economy, culture, the traditional sociological surveys, etc. That all such information ought to be beamed at the general public, the broad mass of working people, is incontestable, since this is essential if citizens are to play an active part in political life.

The difficulty only arises when we come to the other kind of beamed information, collected *on the special instructions of administrative bodies* for the purposes of studying the situation in a particular sector of the economy, cultural or social life, either as a basis for taking a decision in the course of the current plan, or in response to a signal indicating an unfavourable trend. Such information may be secret in that it relates to defence or state security, or contains data that has been officially classified. Apart from such information as this, all the other data in this category should certainly be made accessible to the representative bodies and public organisations of the working people. This does not mean that it should necessarily be made public, since it might concern purely administrative and current executive matters of no interest at all to the public at large. It simply means that the administrative bodies ought not to withhold such information when an appropriate request is made.

The Soviet and Party press has frequently carried criticisms of individual officials for withholding information requested by representatives of public organisations or even of government bodies. According to the Constitution deputies have the right to make inquiries to which all representatives of government bodies from the district executive committee chairman to the minister are obliged to provide an exhaustive answer.

At the same time, it must be precisely established by whom and according to what procedure can administrative information be requested, how should the appropriate request be formulated and

what responsibility should be borne by leading officials of administrative bodies refusing to satisfy a legitimate demand, etc.

2. *Assessment of data.* Anybody on receiving any kind of information automatically assesses it and draws his own conclusions from it. Here we are speaking not of this personal assessment on one's own account, but of specially organised data processing and examination of the ensuing results, which is expressed in one of three decisions: (a) to set a new task; (b) to collect additional data (carrying out special investigations, sending a commission of experts to the spot, etc.); (c) to file the results of the processed data.

It is extremely difficult to place this stage of the cycle under control. The processing of the data taking into account all its implications and side effects is an extremely complicated task requiring highly specialised knowledge of the subject and the use of auxiliary technical means (for instance, collation of some aspect of the new information with previously collected data).

Therefore, although this stage is open to participation by the working people and any member of the public can come along and express an opinion on the data that has been made known, control over the process would not seem to be essential here.

This assertion may seem rather strange at first sight. Anybody who has studied the science of management and has had anything to do with practical administration, is well aware of the tremendous importance of a correct assessment of data received, especially where it is contradictory and comes from sources with a different evaluation of the situation (i.e., where there is the danger of taking deliberate or accidental misinformation at its face value).

However, firstly, no democratic forms exist which could be applied to this stage without detriment to the normal course of the administrative process and to the task in hand and, secondly, it is still possible to exert indirect control over the evaluation of data at later stages of the process.

3. *Stating the problem.* This is one of the most important stages of the administrative process, upon which the success of the whole task very largely depends.

The first thing to be noted here is that this stage really involves actually setting the tasks of the administrative cycle. Some may object that 80 per cent of administration is accomplishing already set and periodically recurring tasks: thus, the constant task or function of the industrial ministries is to keep production running smoothly, and expand output according to the plan targets, with the human

and material resources available. But in actual fact the uniformity of the task here is only apparent and may only be the result of a purely bureaucratic approach. The task of increasing production by 10 per cent in 1968 is not at all the same thing as the task of increasing production by 10 per cent in 1965, for example. It is a new task both in its nature and the resources deployed to achieve it, and a number of unknowns are bound to arise in the process. On the other hand, no plan targets (especially in conditions of increasing independence at the factory and economic organisation level) obviate the need for solving highly complex and responsible problems.

A clear, concise formulation of the problem is an essential prerequisite for its rational solution. Naturally, the administrative bodies are vitally interested in receiving help from the public in this and knowing whether the given task really has the importance ascribed to it or whether it has been exaggerated (or minimised). A statement of the problem that is accompanied by a reference to the original information and its evaluation makes it possible to assume control over the preceding stage of the administrative cycle and introduce any necessary amendments.

This being so, it is possible, and indeed desirable, to employ the most various means at this stage, from discussion at meetings of the Soviets of working people's deputies, their permanent and interim committees to open debate in the press.

The reader is reminded that we are dealing with the administrative process, the possibility and expediency of control over the functions exercised by government bodies, "supervision" of measures originating from the state apparatus. This by no means replaces such a constantly operating and powerful instrument of democracy (and hence of democratic control, too) as the opportunity the working people and their organisations have to take initiative (legislative included) on questions relating to any sphere of social life.

4. *Preparing the draft decision.* This is a stage which should be entirely entrusted to specialist administrators on one condition: namely, that they are obliged to take into account as far as possible the remarks and suggestions expressed at the preceding stage of stating the problem (in the press, at meetings, etc.).

5. *Decision-making.* From the point of view of the science of administration this is the most important of the entire administrative cycle. However, it should be borne in mind that this term is generally applied to the whole preparatory phase leading up to the preparation of the draft decision. Since in this case the process is

divided into sections and detailed, the actual decision-making stage assumes somewhat less importance.

Strictly speaking, however, here too decision-making should be at the centre of attention since this is the decisive moment of government and administration in general. But indeed owing to its exceptional importance this stage is more scrupulously and precisely regulated. Apart from the Constitution, there are numerous laws, decrees, rules, directives and other regulations that precisely indicate (for different bodies and categories of officials) who has the right to make a decision and how the decision should be formulated, the period for which it is in force, who has priority in cases of conflict and contradiction, etc. Strict adherence to these various regulations is the first and most important condition for ensuring that this stage is submitted to control.

Let us dwell for a moment on one of the forms of such control, the collegial principle. This means not only collegiums with a single leader as envisaged in the very structure of administrative bodies, but rather a collegial authority in the broadest sense of the term, as the mandatory procedure of submitting a question for discussion by various kinds of collegium prior to passing a decision.

Thus, for example, you have collegial control when a factory manager submits for review by the trade-union committee questions relating to the assignment of accommodation or presents for discussion at a production meeting matters concerning developing output, increasing labour productivity, modernising plant and equipment, etc. Quite possibly these forms of democracy can be ascribed to other categories, but in our opinion the term collegial control is most fully applicable to their substance. It is noteworthy that this is the concept that has become established in the everyday life of Soviet society.

As for the question of individually led or collegiate bodies in the government apparatus, it is one of the most fully and exhaustively treated subjects in law. On the basis of Lenin's valuable ideas, Soviet lawyers and legal experts have made an extensive description of both kinds of administration, and come up with many useful proposals as regards methods of combining (insofar as this is possible) the positive aspects of the two.

The question of what might be called "public collegial control", on the other hand, has received considerably less attention. Yet it is acquiring an increasing importance today, now that the scope for initiative accorded to individual factories and organisations is being

extended through economic reforms currently in progress. In present conditions the results of economic activity exert a far more direct influence on the material incentives offered to workers, and the conditions provided for leisure and cultural activities. Each member of a working collective has a vested interest in the factory management acting as energetically and efficiently as possible and producing the maximum return for the minimum outlay of resources. This provides an additional objective basis and powerful psychological stimuli for growing worker participation in production management.

The most diverse forms of public participation in administration are in existence in factories in the USSR and other socialist countries. The time has surely come to analyse these forms and carry out the necessary sociological research to assess their efficacy and suggest improvements in accordance with present-day requirements and make proposals for the creation of a well-ordered system of democratic institutions in production at the factory level. Ample opportunities are surely available for direct worker participation in administration in one of its most important areas—the taking of decisions on which the position of the work collective depends, and hence (to a greater or lesser extent) the welfare of all its members.

6. *Organisation.* This stage is the “holy of holies” of administration and therefore not easily subjected to any form of interference.

True, at this stage a number of tasks are solved that have a considerable effect on the outcome of the administrative cycle, so that democratic control could play a most important role here. For example, the organisation of work begins with drawing up a plan and choosing people to be entrusted with carrying it out. Public advice would be useful in solving either or both of these tasks. But the negative effects could very easily outweigh any possible benefit to be derived from this. First, the introduction of an element of debate is likely to considerably delay the actual process of organisation, and make the administrators hesitant and uncertain from the outset. Second, by achieving the adoption of its own proposals here, the public would thereby remove responsibility from the officials and at the same time deprive itself of the moral right to insist that people be called to account for shortcomings.¹

¹ There exists a certain tendency to “overload” the administrative process with excessive control which is, of course, every bit as harmful as insufficient control. This tendency is to be noted too in the actual system of administration, where often narrow specialisation leads to an abundance of special control bodies.

These considerations by no means exclude the possibility of an administrative body deciding of its own accord to turn to a Party organisation or trade-union committee for help and support in mobilising people and explaining the tasks and generally creating a favourable atmosphere for their successful implementation. Such social functions have always been, and remain, an essential part of Party political leadership and bear absolutely no relationship to unjustified interference in the administrative process, or any replacement of the actual functions of administration. Nor do they in any way restrict the competence of officials entrusted with tasks, or their right to take responsible decisions at any stage of organisation of the task.

7. *Routine control.* Here it is a question not of control in the broad sense of the word but of control as a particular stage of the administrative process. To look at it from the point of view of cybernetics, it can be called the *feed-back stage*, at which the administrative body checks how closely the "given parameters and criteria of the means to the end" are being adhered to.

Elements of internal feed-back do exist at other stages, during organisation, adjustment, etc. Indeed, without information signals as to how the matter is progressing it is impossible to pass from one stage to another. However, at least once, feed-back must become not an element but the whole of the work of administration. This is essential to prevent errors creeping in which it will be extremely difficult to rectify later.

The ideal time for this "special feed-back session" is the initial stage of organisation when, on the one hand, the direction and speed of the work has been determined sufficiently to be able to foresee its possible results and, on the other hand, the work has not gone too far to prevent any necessary corrections being made.

Routine control is carried out both by the administrative bodies themselves and by special local and central organisations whose activities embody one of the major functions of the socialist state, that of accounting and control, by the public control bodies. At this particular stage, no other democratic forms would seem to be necessary.

This is especially true in as much as the USSR Public Control Committee leans heavily in its work on Party, trade-union and Komsomol organisations, on hundreds of thousands of public controllers—indeed, ultimately on the activity and proprietary interest in the outcome of public tasks demonstrated by the broad masses of the working people.

8. *Adjustment.* Like organisation, this stage really requires personal control and individual responsibility. That is, of course, once the material from the routine control has been taken into consideration and the appropriate conclusions drawn.

However, if intervention in the process of adjustment is undesirable, it is nevertheless in our opinion absolutely essential to inform the public of the fact that such adjustment is being made. For, to get away from specialised terminology for a moment, what we are really talking about is *the efficacy of the system of public control* (in the broad sense of the word).

Indeed, one of the features of "bureaucracy" is total disregard for signals indicating the unsuccessful course of work, especially when these signals do not proceed from governing bodies but from the collective, public controllers, and the press. The CPSU is waging a ceaseless struggle against such phenomena and ensuring that one of the fundamental conditions of socialist democracy is met—namely, healthy reaction to criticism. At the Communist Party congresses and plenums of the Central Committee, special decrees have frequently stressed that all state organisations and officials are obliged to respond immediately to proposals and criticism and answer letters from the working people without delay, and act accordingly.

If the appropriate governing bodies do not inform the public of the measures being taken in accordance with their remarks and suggestions, in the broad sense, to adjust, amend and improve things, this is legitimate grounds for repeat control and, where necessary, calling to account those responsible.

9. *Checking execution and*

10. *Assessing the results.* Although the two final stages in the control cycle are substantially different,¹ they can be considered together as far as democratic control is concerned.

A collective taking part in implementing a given administrative task has a direct interest in participating in drawing conclusions and assessing the results. First, because this determines the degree of material and moral incentive for the task in hand (or penalties, as the case may be). But also because it needs, this time together with the public as a whole, to receive information on how much of the plan has already been accomplished, whether they are achieving the

¹ Checking execution involves primarily establishing how precisely the task has been accomplished, and might entail the "completion" or "redoing" of particular work. Only when it has been established that amendment is impossible or unnecessary do we come to the stage of assessing the results.

necessary development rates and what are the most typical shortcomings as regards the organisation and quality of the work they have done.

There are many different forms of conducting public control at this last stage of the cycle. They include discussion of the results of plan fulfilment (by time schedule or by particular tasks) at meetings of Party, trade-union and Komsomol organisations, selecting with the participation of both the administration and the collective the workers who have particularly distinguished themselves, and giving bonuses and rewards for consistent outstanding work, etc.

These would seem to be the principal opportunities for public control of the administrative process. But the scheme offered above by no means pretends to be perfect. It is clearly somewhat arbitrary and hence tentative, and is primarily intended to clarify and illustrate the following basic idea: *the degree and forms of worker participation in administration cannot be identical at all stages of the administrative process*. Therefore, in preparing scientific proposals for forms and methods of general public participation in administration it is necessary to proceed not from an abstract idea, but from the objective opportunities for ensuring the efficacy of such participation in particular conditions and its conformity to the interests of the task in hand, the interests of the workers themselves.

The most ample opportunities for participation in administration, for effective control and the greatest need for such control arise at the following stages of the administrative cycle: *stating the problem, decision-making, routine control and assessing the results*.

As for the question of which particular democratic forms can be most successfully employed at the various stages, the answer is that it will depend very much on the concrete administrative process in question.

Thus, Lenin's teaching on socialist democracy provides the fundamental methodological basis for solving the problem of combining growing specialisation of administrative work with increasing worker participation. We therefore feel justified in quoting a rather long passage from "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'":

"The democratic principle of organisation—in its highest form, in which the Soviets put into effect proposals and demands for the active participation of the masses not only in discussing general rules, decisions and laws, and in controlling their fulfilment, but also

directly in their implementation—implies that every representative of the masses, every citizen, must be put in such conditions that he can participate in the discussion of state laws, in the choice of his representatives and in the implementation of state laws. But it does not at all follow from this that we shall permit the slightest chaos or disorder as regards who is responsible in each individual case for definite executive functions, for carrying out definite orders, for controlling a definite joint labour process during a certain period of time. The masses must have the right to choose responsible leaders for themselves. They must have the right to replace them, the right to know and check each smallest step of their activity. They must have the right to put forward any worker without exception for administrative functions. But this does not at all mean that the process of collective labour can remain without definite leadership, without precisely establishing the responsibility of the person in charge, without the strictest order created by the single will of that person.”¹

In conclusion, it can be safely said that the growing complexity of administration of modern society certainly does not raise any insuperable barriers to the constant growth of participation by the public at large in administration. The scientific and technological revolution never has been and never will be an enemy of democracy: on the contrary, it is rather its powerful ally, since it permits fuller satisfaction of people's material and spiritual requirements, ensuring favourable conditions for the all-round development of the human personality.

Many scientists and scholars in the West, including natural scientists, are sceptical about the future of democratic institutions. Just as the physicists at the beginning of this century, of whom Lenin wrote in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* sounded the death knell for the “disappearance of matter”, certain mathematicians, physicists and cybernetics experts in the capitalist countries voice alarm today over the impending “crisis of democracy”.

The following, for example, is what the *Chicago Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* had to say of the incursion of modern science and technology into the realm of organisation and administration of society. “‘Counsel’ it (science-G.S.) is sometimes called. Awkward and ambiguous as this term seems, it is meant to cover the scientific expertise and the new decision-making devices which bypass the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 212.

legislative process to establish a nation's fundamental policies. Through this type of function the scientific revolution is beginning to work its corrosion of traditional democratic institutions. What is needed is nothing less than a new theory of legislation and an appropriate new theory of representation to fit with it. . . . The scientific revolution, like other revolutions which have gone before, will require its own 'new science of politics'.¹ . . . The constitutionalization of science promises to be the gravest political challenge of the coming age. It will require a revolution in our thinking to match that already in our midst."²

What is in fact being "corroded" is not such traditional democratic principles as law personal freedom, the franchise, etc., but the bourgeois state as an instrument of domination of an exploited majority by an exploiting minority. This is what the scientific revolution really challenges, adding its weight to the struggle of the working class and all working people against the obsolete system of capitalist oppression of individuals and nations.

As for socialism, it represents the answer to the "challenge of the coming age", the demand for progress. That is why the growing complexity of the administrative process, the emergence and development of a special science of management are unable to undermine the democratic principles that underlie the socialist system. They merely produce a need to mobilise the vast reserves of democracy inherent in the socialist, communist mode of production, to discover new forms of mass participation in government and administration to supplement the old ones and continually extend and improve the whole political system.

Another important problem can also be successfully solved on this same basis: namely, that of ensuring constant improvement of the competence of the administrative apparatus, and better and more democratic selection of cadres.

¹ De Tocqueville.

² *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 1964, p. 17.

CHAPTER 10

THE SELECTION OF CADRES

At the very dawn of the revolution, Lenin insisted that the task of teaching the working people state administration should be begun immediately. This categoric demand expressed the most urgent task at that time, on which the very fate of the socialist revolution depended. It was a question of whether the Bolsheviks could hold on to the reins of government or whether, having resisted the foreign intervention and the Whites, they would falter under the onslaught of famine, destruction and epidemics, and succumb to the petty-bourgeois element with its inevitable anarchy and lack of discipline and organisation.

Bourgeois propaganda was scathingly ironical about the idea of allowing every "housewife" a part in state administration. The meaning of Lenin's slogan was grossly distorted, and the matter was presented as though the housewife was to be taken away from the kitchen sink and placed at the helm of state, whereas the revolution set itself the truly herculean task of teaching the broadest sections of the population the fundamentals of administration and getting them to actively participate in political life, of selecting from among the masses the most capable people who, after receiving the appropriate training, would make highly efficient administrators and organisers.

The tremendous attention Lenin and his comrades paid to developing consistently scientific principles for building up the apparatus of the socialist state, forms and methods of managing various processes of social development, and the persistence with which the leader of the revolution called for people to study Taylor and other new theories of bourgeois scholars on the scientific organisation of

labour, the concern he showed over the establishment of research institutes and the publishing of manuals dealing with administration and government, all bore fruit.

It is specially important to remember that the Soviet science of administration and management was developed not so much in response to the needs of customary administration but for an entirely new economic and political system. Therefore, right from the start, it emerged as a militant science based on Party commitment and Marxist methodological principles.

A central place in the nascent Soviet science of administration was rightly occupied by the question of training, selecting, and appointing cadres, and especially senior cadres—people to plan the national economy, organise the work of various branches of the state administration, factories and departments and their sub-divisions in industry, agriculture, culture and the service sphere.

"Today, the workers' and peasants' state is the 'proprietor'," Lenin wrote, "and it must select the best men for economic development; it must select the best administrators and organisers on the special and general, local and national scale, doing this *publicly*, in a methodical and systematic manner and on a broad scale."¹

This question was particularly urgent in that the revolution was to raise Russia from the depths of extreme backwardness to the heights of progress, while the number of trained technicians and experts who could be mobilised was almost negligible. Moreover, a new type of man was needed, not simply a trained specialist prepared to do what was required of him for substantial rewards, but a man devoted to communist ideas, an enthusiastic mass organiser capable of tremendous self-sacrifice and exertion, an explorer and innovator. Hundreds of thousands of new specialists had to be added to the Party vanguard which together with Lenin was creating the new state system and to those scientists and technicians who wholeheartedly embraced the worthy cause of socialist transformation of the country. The Party spared neither efforts nor resources for the solution of this task, and accomplished it successfully.

Today, of course, the cadre problem is quite different from what it was in the early years of Soviet government. The USSR now disposes of a vast army of qualified specialists of all kinds, many-million strong, representatives of the generations that have grown up under Soviet government, educated in a spirit of Marxist-Leninist

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 388.

views, devoted to the cause of communism. Today, vast opportunities exist for selecting the people most worthy of exercising administrative functions.

"At present," said L. I. Brezhnev addressing the 23rd Congress of the CPSU, "we have every possibility of seeing to it that Party, state and economic bodies and mass organisations are headed by competent organisers who have a profound knowledge of their business and have authority among both Communists and non-Communists. The interests of communist construction demand the bolder promotion of young energetic people. In so doing it is essential to remember the need to maintain a correct proportion of old and young executives."¹

There are hundreds of thousands of industrial enterprises, construction projects, state and collective farms and establishments of every kind, from central boards to theatres and hospitals in this country today. Within these enterprises and establishments there are shops, departments, sections, and other sectors of activity. And it is in the public interest that every one of them should be headed and run by people eminently fit for the job, people who are civil, energetic and enterprising.

The main purpose in all work with cadres is to ensure that the most capable people are appointed to administrative and management posts. This involves an incredibly complicated process of selection, which ought to ensure that the final result is what the scientists call the optimal version.

The big question is how to select the most worthy from among the worthy. For a person's organisational abilities are basically revealed and perfected in practical activity, in the performance of concrete duties requiring independent initiative and enterprise. Where is the "scanner" for helping spot the organisational talent? The answer, of course, is: There isn't one! And even if it were possible to reveal the appropriate abilities in a person in advance, a long period of special training is required to develop them and bring them out, find in what area they can best be applied and turn out a first-class specialist administrator or production manager.

The need for special training courses for administrators and production managers is a matter that has been raised with growing insistence in the press in recent years. There have been proposals for organising special training colleges and for introducing the

¹ 23rd Congress of the CPSU, p. 127.

science of management as a subject in the curriculum of higher educational establishments, as a way of helping yesterday's students who suddenly find themselves faced with the practical realities of organisational work in a new collective to adopt the right approach in dealing with people and promoting a healthy atmosphere in relations between administrative staff so that they acquire respect.

An article on management science by V. Lisitsyn, Vice-Chairman of Gosplan (State Planning Committee), Hero of Socialist Labour, and G. Popov, head of the administrative studies laboratory at Moscow University, published in *Pravda* (January 19, 1968), is interesting in this respect. The authors speak of the need "to systematically select administrators capable of occupying higher posts, ascribe them to a special reserve and enroll them in educational institutions to be trained accordingly". They hold that higher educational establishments should become the main base for initial and subsequent training of administrators and that special management schools should be attached to them. This approach is also sensible in that it would make it possible to promote young people, with a large stock of energy, to administrative positions more boldly and confidently.

A certain predominance of older people in senior posts is only natural, since these are the people with the greatest experience. But the training and energy of the young is no less important when all is said and done. Clearly, sensible proportions must be maintained here, established not according to artificial arithmetical calculations but through selection of the most worthy and suitable irrespective of age or length of service.

We ought perhaps to dwell for a moment on the question of factory managers, who might well qualify for the title of the central cogs in the entire social mechanism. The manager's role is especially important in that he is responsible for everything both to the collective and to the state, it is he in the last resort who controls the work process, deploys people and supervises their actions. Moreover, this role is being sharply increased owing to the greater independence factories are acquiring, and their being freed from excessive and often petty patronising from above. This is the direction improvement of the system of planning and national economic management is taking in the USSR and other socialist countries.

Clearly, the exceptionally important functions and responsibilities the factory manager now assumes, and likewise the collective-farm chairman, the chief producer of a theatre and so on, require especial-

ly careful filtering in the selection of candidates. But there is more to it than this. The manager can only successfully perform his duties provided he enjoys the sympathy and support of the collective and has their complete confidence. This point is political rather than moral: the manager is simultaneously the agent of the state in the collective in question and the agent of the collective in the socialist state.

This being so, the procedure for the appointment of managers should be made more public, and made to depend more on the opinion of the collective. How can this be done?

Only practice can really show properly the most effective system of selection and appointment of managers. Perhaps we should begin by a little social experimentation in this field. In fact indeed, some such experiments are already being carried out: a case in point being the election of the school principal by the staff which has been introduced on an experimental basis by the RSFSR Ministry of Education. Another possibility would be filling vacancies through open competition, as is the practice at some leading higher educational establishments and scientific research institutes.

V. M. Chkhikvadze, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences wrote in his book *The State, Democracy and the Law* that it might be a good idea to develop a system of *objective criteria* for selecting people for managerial posts. He has the following to say on the subject of promotion:

"Mandatory conditions should be established through appropriate normative acts, to which the candidate for a particular post must conform (education, training, qualifications, experience of successful administrative work in the relevant field, etc.). It is important to ensure extensive preliminary discussion of the candidatures put forward for managerial posts. The practice of discussing such candidatures at staff meetings of the collective in question might also be a useful procedure. The role of the press ought to be stepped up in this matter. A strictly collegiate procedure on all questions of appointments, sometimes through secret ballot, and filling specialist vacancies in the national economic and socio-cultural administration, would also be expedient. Finally, there might be a system of objective criteria for assessing the activity of workers in the state apparatus, for mandatory consideration in solving questions of promotion."

Elsewhere in the same work, the author suggests "extending the number of posts appointment to which involves the approval of

public organisations or at least taking their opinion into account", and also "making the appointment of managers to central and local industrial bodies of state administration depend upon the decision of appropriate permanent committees."

All these suggestions, and many others, that have been made in scientific literature, require classifying and careful practical examination.

To conclude, I should like to stress in particular the following important aspects of work in the selection of leading cadres:

(1) the teaching of the science of management and special training for administrators and managerial cadres. (2) extension of the forms of control by the working people over managerial appointments; (3) selection of management cadres according to precise scientific criteria, ensuring highly competent management.

The basis for such criteria is provided by Lenin's well-known demand to approach cadres: "(a) from the point of view of conscientiousness, (b) from the political side, (c) knowledge of the job and (d) administrative abilities."¹

The problems of scientific organisation of the selection of cadres is of great importance for the national economy, for successful fulfilment of the plans of communist construction in all spheres of life of Soviet society. That is why they receive such constant attention from Party and government organisations and the public at large. The correct training and appointment of cadres has been, and still is, regarded by the Communist Party as one of the most important areas of its activity.

¹ *Lenin Miscellany XXIII*, p. 164 (in Russian).

CHAPTER 11

THE LEGEND OF THE FREE WORLD

If we are to properly understand the various tasks that socialism has solved or is in the process of solving in the field of developing individual freedom, we must take a look, if only briefly, at the legacy inherited from the past. This assumes special importance in that the question of individual freedom is a central issue of the ideological struggle, and bourgeois propaganda tries to demonstrate the superiority of the capitalist system above all with reference to the idea of freedom. President Kennedy was subscribing to this thesis when he said that there are two great forces in the modern world, "world communism and the world of free choice".

Let us see to what extent these proud claims that modern capitalism is synonymous with freedom are founded.

The triumph of the bourgeois revolutions and the establishment of capitalism was accompanied by progress as regards the position of the individual. The slave was literally his master's chattel. The serf was entirely dependent on his landowner, who could buy and sell him. The bourgeois revolution officially abolished all non-economic forms of dependence between people. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen passed by the National Convention in France in 1793 stated: "A man may sell his services and his time, but he may not sell himself, nor may he be sold. His person is not alienable property."

In slave-holding and feudal societies, the ruling classes enforced a way of thinking on the working people that was to their own advantage. There was no question of freedom of conscience. In Ancient Rome at one time Christians were crucified, in the same way

as their "saviour" was reputed to have been put to death. Later, when Christianity had become the state religion, pagans suffered a similar fate. In the Europe of the Middle Ages the fires of the Inquisition burned brightly—the fate of those "heretics" who had dared to doubt the truth of the Catholic doctrine. On St. Bartholomew's Eve, 1572, the Catholics of Paris massacred 30,000 Protestant Huguenots.

The bourgeois revolution proclaimed freedom of speech and freedom of conscience. This is what the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen said on the subject: "The right to express one's thoughts and opinions, in print or any other form, the right to assemble peacefully, and free religious practice may not be forbidden. The need to mention these rights indicates either the presence of despotism or fresh memory of it."

In slave-holding and feudal times, the curse of their birth hung over the "lower" orders from the cradle to the grave. The person who was born into a slave family was condemned to being a slave all his life, and likewise with the serf. No amount of talent and ability was a substitute for pedigree.

The bourgeois revolution abolished all kinds of privileges of the higher estates: "All citizens may be equally admitted to public office: free nations know no other basis of preference in their election but virtue and talent."

All this, it need hardly be mentioned, represented a considerable progress in the emancipation of the individual. All the rights and freedoms of the individual were proclaimed in the constitutions of the bourgeois nations. All, that is, except for two: freedom from exploitation and the right to work.

Nowhere as in the evaluation of these two circumstances is the class character of contemporary bourgeois political economy and philosophy, sociology and law revealed with such force.

These disciplines have long since left the cloister for the wide world and have given up the propagation of obscurantist ideas in favour of appealing to democratic public opinion and reckoning with it to some extent. In the struggle between the two opposed socio-political systems, bourgeois science artfully disguises its service to capital by donning democratic attire and even on occasion using Marxist terminology. Were this not so, it would be quite incapable of performing its social role.

Yet on this point it gives the game away. For only one in a hundred of the Sorbonne, Oxford or Yale professors who, proud

of their objectivity, criticise capitalism almost as much as socialism, discuss the convergence of the two systems, and as evidence quote Descartes and Marx with equal respect, is prepared to accept the elementary truth that if a man is not free from poverty and exploitation all other rights and freedoms lose most of their meaning and become hollow though fine-sounding phrases.

This is the great tabu, the holy of holies of the world of private enterprise, that must be kept hidden away as far as possible from human eyes. Any other admissions can be commented on as seen fit. One can recognise, for example, that unemployment and the production cycle are permanent features of capitalism, that the burden of militarism is too heavy, that part of the population live in dire poverty. But then one goes on to declare that all these ills can be remedied, it is only a question of concentrating the energies of the nation to achieve "new frontiers" or create a "Great Society". But an admission of the fact that man is unfree under capitalism cannot be masked by any schemes however elaborate. There is only one possible conclusion to be drawn and that is the revolutionary one.

The absurdity of the legend of the free world spread by bourgeois propaganda is especially in evidence when one compares the fantastic opportunities the scientific and technological revolution offers to society with the gigantic obstacles the capitalist system raises to their accomplishment in the interests of the individual and all mankind.

The most conservative estimates of the capacity of the productive forces today are sufficient to provide for the needs of 10,000 million people. Yet of the present world population of 3,500 millions, millions of families suffer from chronic malnutrition, live in indescribable conditions of poverty and destitution, many without as much as a roof over their head. Scientists have discovered remarkable medicines that could finally eradicate smallpox and many other diseases. Yet epidemics still flare up, killing large numbers of people or leaving them maimed for life.

An American writer of repute, Paul de Kruif, describes in his book *The Fight for Life* how in 1929, at the time of a so-called boom, pellagra or spotted plague was raging in many localities in the United States. It did not take the doctors long to establish that pellagra is nothing other than slow death from malnutrition and exhaustion of the organism. The doctors' prescription was very simple: a little meat and milk, half a dollar's worth for each victim. But the money was not forthcoming. Then the doctors found a cheaper medicine, ordinary yeast. This reduced the cost of treat-

ment to as little as two cents per day per pellagra victim. However, even at this incredibly cheap price for saving lives, the sums collected by various charity organisations were only enough to help a small proportion of the patients, and in subsequent years the number of victims steadily increased.

And de Kruif asks: "Why is the white plague, consumption, though cradicable, now on the upgrade in our large cities?

"Why does syphilis—which could still more easily be made an evil memory—show no sign of a general down trend?

"Why does any American mother at all have to die of preventable childbed fever?"¹

Those people dying of pellagra were not primitive tribesmen living to a very large extent at the mercy of nature. They were not prehistoric people but people living in our own enlightened age with all the facilities necessary to save them, from vast stores of food to first-class hospitals and clinics at hand. Their sacred rights are embodied in the laws of their country and their Constitution. De Kruif, it is true, was writing in the 1930s and it would be nice to think that the things he described then are no longer relevant. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Yet we are speaking of the richest nation on earth. In poor and backward countries, starvation, which has received the more respectable name of pellagra, claims incomparably greater numbers of victims. The Brazilian sociologist Josué de Castro recounts in his major research work *Geography of Hunger* how famine periodically devastates whole areas of our planet, migrating from one land plundered by capital to another.

There was thus a purpose to our choice of an example from life in the United States of America, the country with the most highly developed productive forces and by far the highest average standard of living in the capitalist world. US capitalism, which has drawn fabulous profits from the pickings of the two world wars and made a fortune from plundering the peoples of the dependent countries, is rich enough to be able to afford perfectly well to buy off the upper layers of the working class or sell motor cars, refrigerators and houses on the never-never. Yet it cannot find the resources to organise a health service accessible to all and is completely powerless to eliminate unemployment.

Such unnatural phenomena as hunger in the midst of abundance and poverty in the midst of fabulous wealth are evidence of the

¹ Paul de Kruif, *The Fight for Life*, New York, 1938, p. 8.

fact that capitalism, far from removing the glaring contradiction between the slogan of freedom and the system of labour exploitation (and indeed incapable of doing so), has actually exacerbated it.

We are not trying to suggest that progress has not affected this side of social development at all. A number of factors, largely at variance with the tendencies of capitalism itself, have led to substantial changes in the material conditions of the working people in capitalist countries. The scientific and technological revolution made possible the mass production of relatively cheap consumer goods, and the stubborn struggle of the working class and other working sections of the population forced the bourgeoisie to make certain concessions. The example of the Soviet Union and the basic urge for survival has led capitalism to introduce a more or less developed system of social security. Holidays with pay, unemployment benefit, health benefits and free elementary or secondary education are indisputable victories for the workers' movement in a number of countries.

But quite apart from the obvious fact that such progress can hardly be attributed to capitalism itself, a decisive criterion in evaluating state policy in this sphere is the proportion of public wealth devoted to social services. In this respect capitalism may be likened to the rich pharisees whom Christ chastised for giving the beggar a small coin from their fat purses. Suffice it to note that the United States of America spends only a few per cent of public money on public education and other social requirements and over half goes for military purposes. This is where the much-vaunted "Welfare State" doctrine reveals its true essence.

Changes are also occurring in the sphere of political rights and personal freedom. In a number of capitalist countries, the fact that the working class is becoming increasingly well-organised, and the development of the democratic movement have made it possible for the working people to enjoy a far greater degree of freedom of speech, the press, assembly and other political freedoms proclaimed by the bourgeois constitutions. The representation of the masses in parliaments and local government in various bourgeois countries has also increased considerably.

However, the opportunity the working class and other working people have of enjoying political rights and freedoms is still very far from corresponding to their numerical weight, let alone their decisive role in the life of society. The means of propaganda are still largely in the hands of the ruling class, just as they were half

a century or even a century ago. The newspaper empires in the United States, the Springer concern with its stranglehold over the publishing market in West Germany—this is who provides the Western reader with information and tells him how to think.

George Matthews has written of the process of monopolisation of the British press that it is business and only business—buying and selling newspapers together with their editors, staff and readership, just as Russian lands were sold in the 19th century together with “souls”, the peasants. Freedom of the press in Britain today is freedom of the press barons to foist their reactionary views on millions of readers, while the “freedom” of the readers is being “free” to choose between the views of three or four press magnates, whose number may, moreover, be further reduced yet.

But it is not simply a question of the press. Today such powerful means of mass communication as radio and especially television have been added to the propaganda arsenal. These means, because of the great expense involved are out of reach of the workers’ organisations. And although the working people are waging a persistent struggle to establish democratic control over the wireless and television broadcasting companies, the ruling class and its ideological assistants dominate the air and the screen almost entirely. Indeed, the whole system is placed on a scientific foundation. With the help of sociological surveys and all kinds of psychological tests a highly sophisticated system of advertising products and ideas has been devised, a method of deceit and delusion.

In the United States, in the course of the witch-hunts organised on the initiative of the notorious Senator McCarthy and company, tens of thousands of people lost their jobs and were blacklisted. Any minor “foible” or token of dissent, from an unsympathetic statement about the Franco regime to a weakness for the Russian cuisine could serve as an excuse for such treatment. The persecution of “dissidents” is something that is still going on today.

Bertrand Russell, criticising the persecution in the USA of a number of peace organisations, wrote: “Which kind of society is it which claims to be concerned about freedom and individual liberty, yet declares itself fully ready to exterminate several hundred million human beings? The kind of society which calmly contemplates such carnage is exactly that society which has contempt for individual liberty and for human dignity. It is no accident and no surprise that such a society attacks those who oppose mass murder and seeks to discredit and destroy them. . . .

"You who prate so often about the Free World might consider whether a secret police, a stable of paid informers, a subversive organisations list, political investigation committees and a general atmosphere of hysterical intolerance are compatible with such a pretence."¹

Here is another typical instance. On May 16, 1967, the legislative assembly of the State of Tennessee voted for the repeal of the "monkey law", which for 42 years had forbidden the propagation of Darwin's theory of the origin of man. The law was first introduced in 1925 at Dayton, during the famous "monkey trial". Only in 1966, a high school teacher, Susan Epperson, was prosecuted under it and biology teacher Harry Scott was subsequently dismissed for challenging medieval obscurantism. Examples of this kind abound and could be cited practically *ad infinitum*. They show how even today Lenin's devastating definition of bourgeois democracy as false, limited and hypocritical is still perfectly applicable.

Quite apart from the social aspect there is also the no less important national aspect. Here too, the last few decades have brought nothing new in capitalist practice.

Of course, the changes that have taken place in the world are enormous. The colonial system of imperialism has collapsed under the impact of the national liberation revolutions, and dozens of nations have acquired political independence and, relying on the support of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, are embarking on the road of social progress. Owing to the persistent struggle of the socialist countries and under the influence of the world communist and democratic movement, the principle of the right of nations to self-determination has received official recognition, while in the UN Charter and other international documents, racialism and discrimination on the basis of nationality have been branded as crimes against humanity which our enlightened age will not tolerate.

But the nature of capitalism and imperialism has not changed. And however hard various enlightened politicians representing the rationalist wing of the present-day bourgeoisie might try to "improve" and "ennoble" their system, rid it of its more unsavoury aspects, such as racialism, their efforts are ultimately doomed to failure.

A few years ago the following incident was reported in the papers. A diplomat of an Eastern country accredited to Washington entered a cafe in one of the more respectable streets. Obviously, he was a newcomer who did not know that in the capital of this great

¹ *Washington Post*, February 5, 1963, p. A 12.

democratic land special areas are reserved for coloured people, as regards living quarters, transport, eating places, etc. The diplomat was cruelly punished for his blithe faith in individual freedom: he was manhandled and thrown out of the cafe.

The State Department expressed its sympathy and apologised for the occurrence. But who is going to say sorry to the 20 million American Negroes, the majority of whom are subject to racist treatment every day of their lives? Who is going to say sorry to the Negro girls and boys whom the racials of Little Rock gave such a rough time to, simply for daring to exercise their right to go to the same school as white children? Who is going to say sorry to the hundreds and thousands of Negroes who fell victims of police repression in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities during the demonstrations by the Negro population, which assumed an especially large scale following the treacherous murder of Martin Luther King?

In the citadel of racialism, the Republic of South Africa, the great majority of the population, the Bantu Negroes, mulattoes and Indians, are subjected to harsh discrimination. The native population, the Bantu, have been deprived of nine-tenths of their lands, and driven into reserves, or Bantustans, where people are abandoned to slow death from hunger and disease. In the towns, the Bantu live in special areas or locations, in conditions of appalling poverty. They have no voting rights and are not covered by labour legislation.

The mulattoes are not much better off. A person's nationality is shown in registration cards, and if one-sixth of the blood in his veins is "non-European" he is a mulatto whose place is the ghetto, he may not marry a white and the notice "Europeans Only" applies to him too.

One of the chief causes of oppression and violation of individual rights is colonialism, which today is either preserved in its "pure" form, or else has assumed a new neocolonialist disguise. Can the human conscience really accept that some countries should have built up their own welfare and continue to accumulate wealth at the expense of others? Surely such plunder makes a mockery of the principle of individual freedom. After all, national freedom is a basic condition for personal freedom. If Angola, for example, is not free, how can any Angolan be considered free?

At the same time, there is no denying the truth of the saying that no nation is free who holds another nation in slavery. No honest person can feel free when he is aware that glaring injustices are

being perpetrated in the name of his country, and the soldiers fighting a colonial war with the purpose of enslaving other peoples do their dirty work sheltering behind their country's national flag.

Today the imperialists continue to make a fortune from exploiting the labour of the peoples of the dependent countries. In order to ensure the necessary conditions for unimpeded plunder they place artificial restraints on the development of national industries and bring a harmful bias into the economies of these countries. It is not in the interests of the powerful Standard Oil Company for Venezuela to have her own developed industry capable of satisfying the domestic market and making the country economically self-reliant. So Venezuela produces mainly oil. Many countries that won political independence several decades ago are still experiencing the effects of colonialism since their economy remains basically "monocultural" and depends to a large extent on foreign markets as outlets for its product and on imports from abroad.

A few years ago, the eminent British scientist John Bernal, in answer to a question by an employee of an international oil company—"What has California got that Iraq hasn't?"—summed up the situation very well. In Iraq, as in California, he said, there was sun, water and oil, but the people living on the banks of the Tigris still live in conditions of dire poverty like their forefathers. Why? Because the wealth California produces stays in California, whereas Iraq's wealth is plundered by foreigners.

Today, Iraq, like the other countries that have embarked on the road of independent economic and political development, has turned to the solution of its own national problems. But all the baneful effects of colonial rule cannot be eliminated overnight. Just as an invading army, when it has been driven from a country, leaves in its wake ashes and destruction, so the colonialists, when they are finally driven out, leave behind them a severely weakened economy and an impoverished population.

The authors of the legend of the free world ought to be asked the following question: Can one call free a society where people are often threatened with starvation, where man exploits his fellow man and nation exploits nation, where people's destiny depends on the play of blind, elemental forces, on competition and anarchy in production, leading to crises, periodic economic slumps and mass unemployment?

Only socialism brings the working people real freedom, freedom from oppression and exploitation.

THE WAY AND THE MEASURE OF FREEDOM

The First World War revealed all the running sores in the decrepit tsarist regime and greatly stimulated the revolutionary movement in Russia. Tsarism was doomed and collapsed under the pressure of the masses, mourned only by the court circles and a small number of monarchist hangers-on who had sponged on the throne.

In the revolution of February 1917 the word "freedom" was the slogan of currents of the most diverse class and political texture. There were Constitutional Democrats, wanting rule by the big bourgeoisie, Socialist-Revolutionaries, for whom freedom meant the rule of petty proprietors. Mensheviks, whose ideal of freedom was modelled on Western bourgeois democracy. Capitalist, merchant, petty-bourgeois, intellectual—each wanted their own kind of freedom. There are as many political parties as there are classes, and as many ideas of freedom. However, events showed that there is a measure, a concept of freedom, capable of uniting the vast majority of the nation. It was expressed in the slogans advanced by the toiling classes of Russia.

The workers demanded that the factories, mills and other means of production be transferred to public ownership, the peasants demanded land: these demands expressed the striving of the working people to free themselves from exploitation.

The peoples of the Russian Empire demanded the right to decide their own future, i.e., national emancipation.

The entire people demanded bread and peace, i.e., freedom from hunger, poverty, destruction and the imperialist war.

These aims could only be achieved by throwing off the chains of big capital, establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the

need for which the Bolsheviks insisted. And all the slogans of the revolution were encompassed by one major slogan: "All Power to the Soviets!"

Power to the Soviets signifies the end of private ownership and exploitation, the transfer of factories, mills and land to the working people and giving peace to the nations.

During the French Revolution of 1789, at one stage the slogan was "Peace to the hovels, war on the palaces". But this slogan was simply bait for the masses, since there were no social forces as yet capable of transforming it into reality. Which is why it was soon transformed into the more abstract slogan of "liberty", "freedom in general", despite the fact that there is no such thing as "people in general" and there were still rich and poor, the haves and the have-nots, the sated and the hungry. What happened in fact was that exploitation continued, but in different forms.

As Lenin frequently insisted, "freedom in general" is simply a fine-sounding phrase of the liberal gentleman which more often than not conceals hypocrisy and deceit. The question Marxists ask is: freedom for whom, and freedom from what? And they answer: freedom for the working people, and freedom from exploitation and want, freedom to work and create—such is the individual freedom communism brings.

The greatness of the October Revolution indeed lies in the fact that it translated into reality not an illusory concept of freedom, but a real, concrete one, putting an end for all time to human exploitation and creating the conditions for the transformation of society according to just, socialist and communist principles.

It was one of the whims of history that the first successful socialist revolution should take place in the world's most multi-lingual country, a focus for all kinds of national oppression and strife. The elimination of this oppression and the emancipation of all the peoples of the former Russian Empire and the establishment of a harmonious union was one of the most important and difficult tasks facing the young socialist state.

One of the first decrees of the Soviet Government was the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which proclaimed the equality and sovereignty of all peoples, their right to self-determination, and the abolition of all national privileges and restrictions. The Soviet Government adhered to these principles in foreign as well as domestic policy. Soviet Russia was the first big power in the world to repudiate one-sided treaties with dependent countries

(Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, etc.), and struggle for the triumph of the principles of equality and freedom and self-determination of nations.

The proclamation of the right of nations to self-determination opened a new chapter in the life of the peoples of the former Russian Empire. Poland and Finland acquired independence. In the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Transcaucasia and Central Asia independent Soviet republics were established which somewhat later, in 1922, voluntarily united in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Soviet legislation specifically forbade any restriction of individual rights on racial or national grounds and all such discrimination became treated as a serious crime liable to severe penalties.

These were only the first steps towards freedom. In order to really taste it properly many of the formerly oppressed nations and nationalities had first to overcome their age-long economic, political and cultural backwardness. The national periphery of tsarist Russia had had practically no industry, the illiteracy rate was appallingly high and indeed many of the peoples had no script at all, while some had not advanced beyond the tribal system. In many places off the beaten track the barbaric customs of the past still survived, such as bloody vendettas, child marriages and stealing brides, etc.

The Communist Party set the task of raising the backward national fringe economically and culturally so that all the nations could advance towards socialism together in harmony and brotherhood. The more advanced nations came to the aid of the backward nations and helped them build up their industry, train their own specialists and develop their culture.

This titanic task attracted to the Soviet land the sympathy of working people all over the world and all who had devoted their life to enlightening the peoples. A veritable pilgrimage to the USSR began. In this connection we should like to quote Rabindranath Tagore, who, already a sick man, nevertheless summoned up the strength to visit the Soviet Union to see for himself the triumphal march of progress.

"It is astonishing to watch the extraordinary vigour with which education spreads throughout Russian society. The measure of education is not merely in numbers, but in its thoroughness, its intensity. What abundant preparation, what tremendous effort, so that no one should remain helpless or idle! Not in European Russia alone, but also among the semi-civilised races of Central Asia, they have opened

the flood-gates of education. Unending effort is being made to bring the latest fruits of science to them."¹

These words were written in 1930. Unfortunately, Tagore was not to live long enough to see the full blossoming of socialist culture in our day.

The new system ensured the prerequisites for freedom in the social sphere too.

The transfer of the means of production to public ownership not only freed people from exploitation but also freed socialist society from the production anarchy and periodic economic crises that are inherent in the capitalist system. Scientific organisation of the economy on the basis of national plans provided wide scope for the development of the productive forces, the flowering of science and technology and the continuous growth of social wealth.

From the very first steps it took, socialism revealed its fundamental superiority over capitalism, reflected in general terms in the radical transformation of the whole system of relations between the individual and society. The centre of gravity was transferred from *formal recognition of personal freedom and equality of citizens before the law to actually ensuring them in practice.*

After abolishing exploitation—the first major step towards creating the material conditions for individual freedom—socialist society went on to assume the obligation of guaranteeing every citizen the most important right of all, *the right to work*. By 1930 this had been transformed from a programme aim into reality: the development of socialist industry made it possible to put an end to unemployment.

Along with the right to work, the Soviet Constitution also guaranteed the right to education. Despite the acute shortage of funds, Soviet Russia deemed it necessary and possible to devote considerable means to organising a universal public education system.

This was no doubt partly dictated by the vital interest the state had in training in the shortest possible time the qualified specialists without which there could be no great economic upswing. But this was certainly not the only motive. The government also intended to bring the wealth of world culture within the reach of the masses and prepare them for aware participation in government. It is noteworthy that the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of 1919 on abolishing illiteracy stated that obligatory

¹ Rabindranath Tagore, *Letters from Russia*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 3.

study of reading and writing was necessary "in order to give the entire population of the republic the opportunity for aware participation in the political life of the country".

The right to work, education, material security in old age and free medical treatment taken together are the material prerequisites ensuring that people have faith in the future and are able to reveal their abilities and apply them to the task. This firm social base makes it possible to employ also the whole complex of political freedoms that socialism embodies in the law and guarantees through the public nature of the means of propaganda (publishing houses, radio and television centres, newspapers and periodicals, social clubs, etc.).

The experience of the Soviet state in establishing the material prerequisites for individual freedom was passed on to the other socialist countries and became their common heritage, assuming a universal significance.

But all this is common knowledge, and we are only mentioning these facts in order to distribute the political accents correctly and cleanse the question of freedom of the various encrustations created by the efforts of anti-communist propaganda. To be completely objective in evaluating the achievements of socialism in the matter of ensuring genuine freedom, it must be remembered that in the broad historical perspective what has been done so far only represents the first steps towards the goal.

Socialism has always been regarded, and still is regarded, in Marxist-Leninist theory as the first stage of communist society. So that in studying various socialist institutions it must be borne in mind that we are considering something *in flux* and must therefore examine the *trend and prospects*.

Applying this general precept, it ought to be stressed that socialism does not yet ensure individual freedom in the form it does when communism is achieved but only represents the way towards it. All along this path, society is resolving a double task, the negative aspect of which is purging itself of the relics of the past, the positive being the creation of conditions for the all-round development of the individual and the full application of his abilities.

One of the favourable devices of anti-communist propaganda is to falsely ascribe communist principles to socialist fact, so that it sometimes seems that it is not so much criticising communism for being communism but for not being "communist" enough, for not having achieved its ideals and goals sufficiently in practice. Remembering what Marx and Lenin said about communism being a classless

society, they then triumphantly declare that there are still class divisions in the USSR and other socialist countries. The mendacity of such methods is immediately obvious to any even slightly objective student. On the one hand, they deliberately omit mentioning that the creation of a classless society is the *ultimate goal* of communist construction; on the other they, again deliberately, ignore the fact that the class structure is severely modified under socialism, that the abolition of private ownership pulls the carpet from under the feet of the exploiter classes leaving no further basis for their existence, so that only working classes and strata of the population remain.

The reactionary bourgeois press makes the same accusations against socialism as regards the absence of individual freedom. A Marxist principle or ideal is usually taken as a point of departure and socialism is then accused of failing to correspond to it in practice.

An objective assessment of what socialism *has already accomplished* towards ensuring genuine individual freedom provides sufficient grounds for recognising the indisputable superiority of the socialist system. Rapid economic growth on the basis of economic planning, high GNP growth rates, the introduction of extensive programmes of public education, the guaranteeing of the social rights of the individual in the Constitution and their realisation in practice, and rapid progress in all spheres of cultural life are just some of the innumerable achievements of socialism which have not only greatly advanced the cause of freedom in the socialist countries themselves but have promoted the cause of freedom throughout the world.

This has been expressed above all in the way the socialist revolution and the experience of building the new society provided a powerful stimulus to the unfolding of the national liberation movement, leading to the break-up of the powerful colonial system of imperialism, so that dozens of nations acquired the opportunity to decide their own future and manage their own affairs independently. Today many of the newly liberated countries have officially declared the building of socialism the goal of their development. For all the differences in approach, the leaders of these countries make no secret of the fact that the example of the Soviet Union and other countries of the world socialist system had a decisive influence on their choice.

Socialism has also produced a radical change in the whole international atmosphere. Under its direct pressure a number of principles and norms affirming the right of nations to freedom and

independence and condemning all forms of colonial banditry, militarism and aggression have been established in international law. Clearly, however, it is not only a matter of making international law more democratic. As the world socialist system increases its power and becomes the decisive force in world development so it becomes a more insuperable barrier to imperialist adventures and a more reliable guarantee of free social development for the nations.

Finally, as already noted, if bourgeois governments are forced today to introduce elements of economic adjustment in the developed capitalist countries, and legally guarantee at least some of the basic social rights, this is all due to the struggle of the working class inspired by the example of the socialist countries. Die-hard supporters of capitalism would do well to consider carefully the remarkable fact that the USSR and the other socialist countries, which at one time lagged well behind the Western countries economically and socially, today provide a source of positive experience and a model for imitation.

In mentioning all these indisputable facts, it is far from our intention to try and pretend that there are no shortcomings in the practical side of building socialism and communism. Observing Lenin's behests, the communist movement analyses the results of its activity with the maximum objectivity and clearly sees where it has failed, shortcomings, omissions, etc. Correcting mistakes and distortions resulting from the ideology and practice of the personality cult, the restoration of socialist legality and Leninist principles in Party and government life, fruitful research into current social problems and a whole system of measures to further develop socialist democracy are clear evidence that socialist society is freeing itself from the weaknesses of childhood and becoming more mature.

Constructive reforms have been introduced in the Soviet Union and most other socialist countries recently, designed to increase efficiency in production, and there have also been important decisions aimed at improving the entire political system and strengthening the democratic principles that underlie it.

What then in these circumstances are the questions of special importance as regards extending individual freedom? As I see it, there are two. The first concerns *achieving a new, considerably higher level of development of all material and cultural prerequisites for individual freedom*. The second involves *finding the optimal combination of personal and social interests applicable to the conditions of developed socialist society*.

The first requires the biggest expenditure of time and energy in practical activity. The aim being to use constant economic and cultural development as a basis for enriching the social rights of all members of socialist society and creating more favourable conditions for all-round personal development. It will entail numerous complications, by no means all of an economic nature. Let us take as an example the question of the further extension of higher education, which is probably going to be a particularly urgent one in the socialist countries with a small area and population. The extensive network of higher educational establishments that has been created in a number of these countries is already sufficient for providing the specialists the economy needs and yet many of the young people of school-leaving age wish to go on to further education. Commenting on the results of a survey on this matter in the Hungarian press, Mód Aladárné noted: "One is struck by the unrealistic nature of such aspirations, for no social system can possibly have a division of labour requiring that one-third of the population should be brain workers with a university education."¹ This is not entirely true, in fact, for automation will eventually eliminate the need for exhausting, monotonous manual work and produce a situation where the vast majority of people work with their minds. However, that is in the future, while the conflict envisaged here must be solved today.

There is also the extremely complicated task of determining a more or less precise measure of personal freedom.

To begin with the ethical aspect of the matter must be considered. Throughout the ages philosophers and political thinkers have argued fiercely over the "moral right" of the state to restrict the freedom of thought and action of individuals over and above a bare minimum essential to community life. The solutions offered were naturally of a class nature. Thus, representatives of various bourgeois schools of thought who defended private ownership and private enterprise as one of the inalienable rights of the individual, categorically rejected the right of the state to intervene in economic life in order to protect or defend any public interests whatsoever.

It was a hundred and fifty years before the bourgeois state abandoned the principle of *laissez-faire* in favour of state intervention in the economy. This evolution occurred under the strongest pressure from economic factors and the political need to adjust capitalism to 20th-century conditions, and was very largely due to the influence of

¹ *Népszabadság*, Budapest, December 10, 1966.

socialism and the working-class struggle. But important though it was, it did not in any way affect the "sacred" principle of private enterprise. True, monopoly capitalism involved a sharp reduction of the sphere of "free initiative". The monopolies, while concentrating production, ousting their weaker rivals and rejecting free enterprise in practice, nevertheless had a vested interest in retaining it as a basic principle. The capitalist monopolies need it particularly in order to sanction and win support for their anti-social economic and political activities. Every attempt by the progressive forces in the capitalist countries to force the bourgeois government to defend a particular public interest (for example, to take measures against monopolisation of the press or to ban racialism and war propaganda) meets with fierce resistance from the ruling classes and is presented as "an encroachment on individual freedom".

The question of freedom cannot be approached from an abstract point of view. To reject a class approach is to do violence to reality. Any moral assessment of the right of the state to restrict individual freedom depends entirely on the basic premises adopted. The proletariat and other working classes reject the right of the bourgeois state to limit their freedom of action in the struggle against capitalism and assert the right of the socialist state to limit freedom of action in the struggle against socialism.

To certain zealots of abstract universal morality labouring under the illusion that they are able to adopt a non-class or supra-class approach such statements will appear extremely biased. Yet they express the only possible degree of objectivity in a class society: when it comes to choosing between two opposed groups of interests, then the choice must obviously be in favour of the interests of the vast majority of mankind, the working classes, rather than in the interests of a tiny minority, the exploiters, in favour of socialism and communism to whom the future belongs rather than capitalism which is doomed to extinction.

In short, whereas there are absolutely no moral grounds for the restriction of freedom for the purpose of strengthening the social system in capitalist society, in socialist society it is morally justified.

This is not to say that the whole matter can be inverted, and the restriction of freedom in socialist society declared its assertion! Politically speaking (and individual freedom is a political concept), it is the fact itself that is important and not the moral evaluation of it. When the state imposes certain restrictions on people and deprives them of the opportunity to act as they see fit in certain matters, it

makes no difference in whose interests this may be (in the interests of the minority, the majority, or the whole of society, including the person himself who fails to realise where his real interests lie), it is nevertheless a restriction of freedom in fact. It cannot be glossed over by any amount of arguments on the good of society, etc.

That is exactly how the founders of Marxism-Leninism saw it. Engels stressed on several occasions that the existence of the state, even the most democratic and representative, automatically meant a certain restriction of freedom. In a letter to A. Bebel, he wrote: "...so long as the proletariat still *uses* the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist."¹

In other words, as long as the state remains there is bound to be a certain restriction of individual freedom, which will gradually grow less as society advances towards communism, in the course of the withering away of the state or the development of socialist state system into communist public self-administration.

Be that as it may, there is no need for any artificial inversions. The strength of Marxist-Leninist theory indeed lies in the complete objectivity with which it shows *both the absolute superiority of socialism to capitalism* (ensuring the social rights of the individual and his constantly growing participation in the solution of public affairs) *and its relative imperfection compared to communism* (the inevitable retention of the state with all that this entails).

To go straight to the heart of the matter we are discussing, its solution ultimately depends on finding an answer to two vital questions: what criterion should be adopted as a basis for establishing restrictions to individual freedom, and who, and according to what procedure, should have the authority to decide that a restriction is necessary?

On the surface, the first question seems extraordinarily simple to answer. Everything that threatens the pillars of the socialist system and any actions intended to undermine it should be energetically thwarted. This refers primarily to political crimes, prosecuted under the criminal code, such as espionage or passing secret information to a foreign power, the organisation of conspiracy against the state, refusal to do military service and other civic duties, hostile propaganda calling for the abolition of the socialist system, deliberate

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 357.

sabotage of the decisions and instructions of government bodies, etc. It also includes the illegal propaganda of racialism, chauvinism and national discord, or militarism and war, and the dissemination of pornography, which are all against the law.

The real difficulty arises when we come to other questions, such as the assessment of statements (public statements, that is, over the radio or television, or in the press) criticising various aspects of official policy or the methods of implementing it, the activity of government and administrative bodies, officials, etc.

The fear is often expressed that critical statements can be used by the enemies of socialism to smear the new social order. Such fears are often well founded. The reactionary bourgeois press does not waste any opportunity to undermine the faith of the masses in the capitalist countries in the effectiveness and justness of socialism. Any miscalculations or failures, especially those admitted by the Communists themselves, are grist to the mill, and they try to present it as an incurable defect of the system.

Yet the beneficial effects of criticism generally more than outweigh the negative ones. Lenin was wont to note that it was far more valuable for the Communist Party and the Soviet state to discover and remedy its shortcomings than to worry about maintaining appearances, upholding external prestige in the face of malicious bourgeois propaganda.

A mistaken attitude to criticism is often due to fundamental misconceptions of what constitutes prestige. There have been numerous examples in the past of criticism of a particular person in the Soviet press being taken as a personal insult and leading to a noisy campaign demanding that similar "attacks" should not occur again.

There are also cases of attempts to hush up criticism with the aim of hiding an unfavourable situation in some administrative department from governing bodies and the public. Sometimes those concerned resort to demagoguery, trying to present the remarks levelled at them as criticism of the principles of socialism.

An extremely widespread cause of incorrect assessments is a subjective approach, which is more often than not due to ignorance or misunderstanding of the subject, lack of competence in the area of activity concerned. Such subjectivism is particularly dangerous in science. This is not to say that socialist society has not the right to intervene in the process of development of science and draw the attention of scientists to erroneous tendencies, departures from fundamental class positions, ineffective abstract theorising, and the like.

This is not only justified but essential, in the first place for science itself. Close public scrutiny and timely intervention can help prevent unnecessary mistakes and reduce the inevitable waste to a minimum.

The whole point is that such intervention should be competent. We should not allow hasty, unfounded judgments to damage the development of various branches of science, as happened at one stage with cybernetics and radiation genetics.

Similar problems arise in evaluating works of art.

Obviously, creative freedom should never be allowed to mean the freedom of the artist from all responsibility to society and the people, the right to place himself above them and pass a judgment against which there is no appeal. Art which has adopted such a stance, renouncing its social functions or undertaking to satisfy hyper-refined, snobbish tastes and vogues, has even less right to call itself art than that which illustrates commonplace truths. The Marxist-Leninist concept of the role of the arts in society rejects both these approaches and asserts a double principle of artistic creation: *freedom of the artist and his responsibility to society*.

Despite the fabrications of anti-communist propaganda, the second aspect of art has never been treated in Marxist-Leninist theory as the right of society to impose a particular way of thinking on the artist. The socialist revolution in Russia carried with it all honest representatives of the creative intelligentsia not by force but because they saw the justness of the cause. They saw that it was a genuinely popular movement, capable of changing the face of the country, dragging it out of its age-old backwardness and torpor and lifting it up to the heights of world culture.

Maxim Gorky and Alexei Tolstoy, Blok and Mayakovsky, Stanislavsky and Glière—with very few exceptions all the major writers and poets, painters and composers were moved by their hearts and consciences to embrace the cause of the revolution. This applies all the more to the vast number of writers and artists educated in Soviet times, whose outlook was formed under the influence of the ideas of scientific communism. They see no contradiction at all between freedom and moral responsibility to the people. Indeed, the artist of socialist society sees serving the interests of the people as the means of expressing his freedom.

Once in a conversation with Klara Zetkin, Lenin spoke of the revolution as creating real freedom for the artist and the Soviet state as his protector and client. "Every artist," he said, "and everyone who considers himself such, has the right to create freely,

to follow his ideal regardless of everything. . . ." At the same time, Communists "should steer this process according to a worked-out plan and must shape its results".¹

Bourgeois propaganda has selected the question of artistic freedom as one of the chief targets for its attacks on socialism. The hypocrisy of such attacks lies in the fact that in capitalist society artistic freedom is a very relative and largely illusory concept. Financial considerations oblige many people to deliberately squander their talent and pander to the perverted tastes of the bourgeois hierarchy.

Nazism, which grew in the soil of the capitalist system, committed to the flames not only books that were the pride of human civilisation but their authors too: the former were burned on bonfires, the latter in the crematoria of Auschwitz and Maidanek.

In stating the indisputable fact that socialism has already secured the conditions for the development of literature and art, we are far from suggesting that this automatically removes the whole problem of the relationship between the artist and society. Party guidance of literature and art is a most complex task. The search has been going on in a number of socialist countries in the last few years for more precise criteria ensuring the maximum creative freedom in conjunction with the maximum responsibility on the part of the artist towards the people.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *On Literature and Art*, p. 250.

CONCLUSION

We have examined some of the most important aspects of socialist democracy and prospects for its improvement and development. Both theory and the whole of historical practice clearly show that whatever obstacles might arise in the path of the new society and however heavy the deadweight of vestiges of the past, socialism is confidently striding forward towards the ideal scientifically substantiated by Marxist-Leninist teaching. The experience of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries has already provided and continues to provide evidence of the indisputable fact that it is the political system of socialism and socialist democracy that can ensure the optimal combination of most effective administration and organisation of modern society with the broadest complex of human rights, people's rule and individual freedom.

Let us now try to extract and formulate in general terms a few theses from the material we have been examining.

1. The birth of socialist democracy marked a tremendous social advance. Even at its early stages, the democracy of the socialist system is incomparably superior to all earlier forms of democracy, since to begin with it extends to the vast majority of the population, the working classes, and later, with the elimination of exploiter classes, to the whole people, and secondly, it is not confined to the sphere of law or even politics, but has a firm material base in the conditions of production and exchange.

2. The crystallisation of the political system appropriate to the socialist economic system is inevitably a more or less protracted process, during which on the one hand the negative legacy from the

past is overcome and on the other a completely new set of ideas and institutions are created and new democratic traditions are formed. Inheriting the best democratic forms developed by progressive thought and the practice of the people's struggle throughout the centuries of exploitation, socialism reveals and establishes unprecedented forms of direct and representative democracy.

3. The establishment of socialist democracy is an objective process determined by the level of maturity of the economic and political system of socialism, the state of class relations and the international situation. Attempts to either delay or artificially hasten the introduction of various democratic forms may be highly detrimental to the whole task of developing socialism. This being so, constant analysis of socio-economic and international conditions with a view to determining the character of the stage in progress, evaluating the degree of maturity of social relations and the level of political awareness, and scientifically substantiating practical proposals for improving socialist democracy is absolutely essential.

4. The development of socialist democracy is not reducible simply to increasing the participation of the working masses in government and enriching the democratic rights of citizens. It necessarily involves improvement of the actual methods of administration in accordance with the essential needs of the economic and ideological-cultural development of society. Democratic procedure is not an aim in itself; it must serve to promote the development of production, qualified solution of all problems of social development, strengthen the conscientiousness and discipline in production and services, the correct selection of leading cadres—ultimately, a maximum increase in the efficiency of administration. Therefore the substantiation of democratic innovations and especially their introduction in practice should be based both on the idea of involving the working people and streamlining the control process.

5. A decisive condition for the development of socialist democracy is increased ideological and political influence of the Communist Party over the entire process of socialist and communist construction, further improvement of the forms and methods of Party leadership of the state and public organisations in accordance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the requirements of the present stage of development of socialism.

The Communist Party acts as the guiding and unifying force in socialist society, ensuring the consolidation of the socio-political and ideological unity of the whole people. This is the best basis for suc-

cessful solution of all the long-term tasks of communist construction, including the improvement of socialist democracy and preparing for the transfer of the government system to communist public self-administration.

6. Despite certain differences in local conditions, the basic laws and trends of development of socialist democracy are the same for all countries that have embarked on the path to socialism guided by the Marxist-Leninist vanguard. As differences in the level of economic and socio-political development are reduced more and more, so not only the principles of organisation of the political system of socialism but the democratic forms in which these principles are expressed become increasingly similar. As a result, exchange of experience in political construction and use of the most valuable forms developed in various socialist countries become increasingly important, as does a free exchange of ideas, and comradely criticism from the standpoint of Marxist-Leninist principles of the forms and methods that have proved unsuccessful and fail to correspond to the requirements of socialist society.

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